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LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

DECEMBER 1902.

The Disentanglers.¹

XII. (*continued*).

ADVENTURE OF THE CANADIAN HEIRESS.

V. The Adventure of Eachain of the Hairy Arm.

ON arriving at the Castle, Logan and Merton found poor Mr. Macrae comparatively cheerful. Bude and Lady Bude had told what they had gleaned, and the millionaire, recognising his daughter's hairpin, had all but broken down. Lady Bude herself had wept as he thanked her for this first trace, this endearing relic, of the missing girl, and he warmly welcomed Merton, who had detected the probable meaning of the enigmatic 'Seven Hunters.'

'It is to *you*,' he said, 'Mr. Merton, that I owe the intelligence of my daughter's life and probable comfort.'

Lady Bude caught Merton's eye; one of hers was slightly veiled by her long lashes.

The telegrams of the day had only brought the usual stories of the fruitless examination of yachts, and of hopes unfulfilled and clues that led to nothing. The outermost islets were being searched, and a steamer had been sent to St. Kilda. At home Mr. Giansesi had explained to Mr. Macrae that he and his partner were forced, reluctantly, by the nature of the case, to suspect treason within their own establishment in London, a thing hitherto unprecedented. They had therefore installed a new

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machine in a carefully locked chamber at their place, and Mr. Giansesi was ready at once to set up a corresponding recipient engine at Castle Skrae. Mr. Macrae wished first to remove the machine in the smoking-room, but Blake ventured to suggest that it had better be left where it was.

'The conspirators,' he said, 'have made one blunder already, by mentioning "The Seven Hunters," unless, indeed, that was intentional; they *may* have meant to lighten our anxiety, without leaving any useful clue. They may make another mistake: in any case it is as well to be in touch with them.'

At this moment the smoking-room machine began to tick and emitted a message. It ran, 'Glad you visited the Hunters. You see we do ourselves very well. Hope you drank our health—we left some bottles of champagne on purpose. No nasty feeling, only a matter of business. Do hurry up and come to terms.'

'Impudent dogs!' said Mr. Macrae. 'But I think you are right, Mr. Blake; we had better leave these communications open.'

Mr. Giansesi agreed that Blake had spoken words of wisdom. Merton felt surprised at his practical common sense. It was necessary to get another pole to erect on the roof of the observatory, with another box at top for the new machine, but a flagstaff from the Castle leads was found to serve the purpose, and the rest of the day was passed in arranging the instalment, the new machine being placed in Mr. Merton's own study. Before dinner was over, Mr. Giansesi, who worked like a horse, was able to announce that all was complete, and that a brief message, 'Yours received, all right,' had passed through from his firm in London.

Soon after dinner Blake retired to his room; his head was still suffering, and he could not bear smoke. Giansesi and Mr. Macrae were in the Castle, Mr. Macrae feverishly reading the newspaper speculations on the melancholy affair: leading articles on Science and Crime, the potentialities of both, the perils of wealth, and such other thoughts as occurred to active minds in Fleet Street. Giansesi's room was in the observatory, but he remained with Mr. Macrae in case he might be needed. Merton and Logan were alone in the smoking-room, where Bude left them early.

'Now, Merton,' said Logan, 'you are going to come on in the next scene. Have you a revolver?'

'Heaven forbid!' said Merton.

'Well, I have! Now, this is what you are to do. We shall both turn in about twelve, and make a good deal of clatter and

talk as we do so. You will come with me into my room. I'll hand you the revolver, loaded, silently, while we talk fishing shop with the door open. Then you will go rather noisily to your room, bang the door, take off your shoes, and slip out again—absolutely noiselessly—back into the smoking-room. You see that window in the embrasure here, next the door, looking out towards the loch? The curtain is drawn already—you will perch on the window-seat and sit tight! Don't fall asleep! I shall give you my portable electric lamp for reading in the train. You may find it useful. Only don't fall asleep. When the row begins I shall come on.'

'I see,' said Merton. 'But look here! Suppose you slip out of your own room, locking the door quietly, and into mine, where you can snore, you know—I snore myself—in case anybody takes a fancy to see whether I am asleep? Leave your dog in your own room: *he* snores—all Spanish bulldogs do. The room will seem occupied.'

'Yes, that will serve,' said Logan. 'Merton, your mind is not wholly inactive.'

They had some whisky and soda-water and carried out the manoeuvres on which they had decided.

Merton, unshod, silently re-entered the smoking-room, his shoes in his hand; Logan as tactfully occupied Merton's room, and then they waited. Presently, the smoking-room door being slightly ajar, Merton heard Logan snoring very naturally; the Spanish bulldog was yet more sonorous. Giansi came in, walked upstairs to his bedroom, and shut his door; in half an hour he also was snoring; it was a nasal trio.

Merton 'drove the night along,' like Dr. Johnson, by repeating Latin and other verses. He dared not turn on the light of his portable electric lamp and read; he was afraid to smoke; he heard the owls towbitting and towwhoing from the woods, and the clock on the Castle tower striking the quarters and the hours.

One o'clock passed, two o'clock passed, a quarter after two, then the bell of the wireless machine rang, the machine began to tick; Merton sat tight, listening. All the curtains of the windows were drawn, the room was almost perfectly dark; the snorings had sometimes lulled, sometimes revived. Merton lay behind the curtains on the window-seat, facing the door. He knew, almost without the help of his ears, that the door was slowly, slowly opening. Something entered, something paused, something stole silently towards the wireless machine, and paused again. Then a glow suffused the further end of the room, a disc

of electric light, clearly from a portable lamp. A draped form, in deep shadow, was exposed to Merton's view. He stole forward on tiptoe with noiseless feet; he leaped on the back of the figure, threw his left arm round its neck, caught its right wrist in a grip of steel, and yelled:

'Mr. Eachain of the Hairy Arm, if I am not mistaken!'

At the same moment there came a click, the electric light was switched on, Logan bounced on to the figure, tore away a revolver from the right hand of which Merton held the wrist, and the two fell on the floor above a struggling Highland warrior in the tartan of the Macraes. The figure was thrown on its face.

'Got you now, Mr. Blake!' said Logan, turning the head to the light. 'Damn!' he added; 'it is Giansesi! I thought we had the Irish minstrel.'

The figure only snarled, and swore in Italian.

'First thing, anyhow, to tie him up,' said Logan, producing a serviceable cord.

Both Logan and Merton were muscular men, and presently had the intruder tightly swathed in inextricable knots and gagged in a homely but sufficient fashion.

'Now Merton,' said Logan, 'this is a bitter disappointment! From your dream, or vision, of Eachain of the Hairy Arm, it was clear to me that somebody, the poet for choice, had heard the yarn of the Highland ghost, and was masquerading in the kilt for the purpose of tampering with the electric dodge and communicating with the kidnappers. Apparently I owe the bard an apology. You'll keep watch on this fellow while I go and bring Mr. Macrae.'

'A message has come in on the machine,' said Merton.

'Well, he can read it; it is not our affair.'

Logan went off; Merton poured out a glass of Apollinaris water, added a little whisky, and lit a cigarette. The figure on the floor wriggled; Merton put the revolver which the man had dropped and Logan's pistol into a drawer of the writing-table, which he locked.

'I do detest all that cheap revolver business,' said Merton.

The row had awakened Logan's dog, which was howling dolefully in the neighbouring room.

'Queer situation, eh?' said Merton to the prostrate figure.

Hurrying footsteps climbed the stairs; Mr. Macrae (with a shot-gun) and Logan entered.

Mr. Macrae all but embraced Merton. 'Had I a son, I could

have wished him to be like you,' he said; 'but my poor boy——' his voice broke. Merton had not known before that the millionaire had lost a son. He did understand, however, that the judicious Logan had given *him* the whole credit of the exploit, for reasons too obvious to Merton.

'Don't thank *me*,' he was saying, when Logan interrupted:

'Don't you think, Mr. Macrae, you had better examine the message that has just come in?'

Mr. Macrae read, 'Glad they found the hairpin, it will console the old boy. Do not quite see how to communicate, if Giansesi, who, you say, has arrived, removes the machine.'

'Look here,' cried Merton, 'excuse my offering advice, but we ought, I think, to send for Donald McDonald *at once*. We must flash back a message to those brutes, so that they may think they are still in communication with the traitor in our camp. That beast on the floor could work it, of course, but he would only warn *them*; we can't check him. We must use Donald, and keep them thinking that they are sending news to the traitor.'

'But, by Jove,' said Logan, 'they have heard from *him*, whoever he is, since Bude came back, for they know about the finding of the hairpin. You,' he said to the wretched captive, 'have you been at this machine?'

The man, being gagged, only gasped.

'There's this, too,' said Merton, 'the senders of the last message clearly think that Giansesi is against them. 'If Giansesi removes the machine,' they say——'

Merton did not finish his sentence, he rushed out of the room. Presently he hurried back. 'Mr. Macrae,' he said, 'Blake's door is locked. I can't waken him, and, if he were in his room, the noise we have made must have wakened him already. Logan, ungag that creature!'

Logan removed the gag.

'Who are *you*?' he asked.

The captive was silent.

'Mr. Macrae,' said Merton, 'may I run and bring Donald and the other servants here? Donald must work the machine at once, and we must break in Blake's door, and, if he is off, we must rouse the country after him.'

Mr. Macrae seemed almost dazed, the rapid sequence of unusual circumstances being remote from his experience. In spite of the blaze of electric light, the morning was beginning to steal into the room; the refreshments on the table looked oddly

dissipated, there was a heavy stale smell of tobacco, and of whisky from a bottle that had been upset in the struggle. Mr. Macrae opened a window and inhaled the fresh air from the Atlantic.

This revived him. 'I'll ring the alarm bell,' he said, and, putting a small key to an unnoticed keyhole in a panel, he opened a tiny door, thrust in his hand, and pressed a knob. Instantly from the Castle tower came the thunderous knell of the alarm. 'I had it put in in case of fire or burglars,' explained the millionaire, adding automatically, 'every modern improvement.'

In a few minutes the servants and gillies had gathered, hastily clad; they were met by Logan, who briefly bade some bring hammers, and the caber, or pine-tree trunk that is tossed in Highland sports. It would make a good battering-ram. Donald McDonald he sent at once to Mr. Macrae. He met Bude and Lady Bude, and rapidly explained that there was no danger of fire. The Countess went back to her room, Bude returned with Logan into the observatory. Here they found Donald telegraphing to the conspirators, by the wireless engine, a message dictated by Merton:

'Don't be alarmed about communications. I have got them to leave our machine in its place on the chance that you might say something that would give you away. Gianesi suspects nothing. Wire as usual, at about half-past two in the morning, when you mean it for me.'

'That ought to be good enough,' said Logan approvingly, while the hammers and the caber, under Mr. Macrae's directions, were thundering on the door of Blake's room. The door, which was very strong, gave way at last with a crash; in they burst. The room was empty. A rope fastened to the ironwork of the bedstead showed the poet's means of escape, for a long rope-ladder swung from the window. On the table lay a letter directed to

*Thomas Merton, Esq.,
care of Ronald Macrae, Esq.,
Castle Skrae.*

Mr. Macrae took the letter, bidding Benson, the butler, search the room, and conveyed the epistle to Merton, who opened it. It ran thus:—

'DEAR MERTON,—As a man of the world, and slightly my senior, you must have expected to meet me in the smoking-room to-night, or at least Lord Fastcastle probably entertained that

hope. But I saw that things were getting a little warm, and made other arrangements. It is a little hard on the poor fellow whom you have probably mauled, if you have not shot each other. As he has probably informed you, he is not Mr. Giansesi, but a dismissed *employé*, whom we enlisted, and whom I found it desirable to leave behind me. These discomforts will occur; I myself did not look for so severe an assault as I suffered down at the cove on Sunday evening. The others carried out their parts only too conscientiously in my case. You will not easily find an opportunity of renewing our acquaintance, as I slit and cut the tyres of all the motors, except that on which I am now retiring from hospitable Castle Skrae, having also slit largely the tyres of the bicycles. Mr. Macrae's new wireless machine has been rendered useless by my unfortunate associate, and, as I have rather spiked all the wheeled conveyances (I could not manage to scuttle the yacht), you will be put to some inconvenience to re-establish communications. By that time my trail will be lost. I enclose a bank-note for 10*l.*, which pray, if you would oblige me, distribute among the servants at the Castle. Please thank Mr. Macrae for all his hospitality. Among my books you may find something to interest you. You may keep my manuscript poems.—Very faithfully yours,

‘GERALD BLAKE.

‘P.S.—The genuine Giansesi will probably arrive at Lairg to-morrow. My unfortunate associate (whom I cannot sufficiently pity) relieved him of his ingenious machine *en route*, and left him, heavily drugged, in a train bound for Fort William. Or perhaps Giansesi may come by sea to Lochinver. ‘G. B.’

When Merton had read this elegant epistle aloud, Benson entered, bearing electrical apparatus which had been found in the book-boxes abandoned by Blake. What he had done was obvious enough. He had merely smuggled in, in his book-boxes, a machine which corresponded with that of the kidnappers, and had substituted its mechanism for that supplied to Mr. Macrae by Giansesi and Giambresi. This he must have arranged on the Saturday night, when Merton saw the kilted appearance of Eachain of the Hairy Arm. A few metallic atoms from the coherer, on the floor of the smoking-room, had caught Merton's eye before breakfast on Sunday morning. Now it was Friday morning! And still no means of detecting and capturing the kidnappers had been discovered.

Out of the captive nothing could be extracted. The room

had been cleared, save for Mr. Macrae, Logan, and Bude, and the man had been interrogated. He refused to answer any questions, and demanded to be taken before a magistrate. Now, where was there a magistrate?

Logan lighted the smoking-room fire, thrust the poker into it, and began tying hard knots in a length of cord, all this silently. His brows were knit, his lips were set, in his eye shone the wild light of the blood of Restalrig. Bude and Mr. Macrae looked on aghast.

‘What *are* you about?’ asked Merton.

‘There are methods of extracting information from reluctant witnesses,’ snarled Logan.

‘Oh, bosh!’ said Merton. ‘Mr. Macrae cannot permit you to revive your ancestral proceedings.’

Logan threw down his knotted cord. ‘I beg your pardon, Mr. Macrae,’ he said, ‘but if I had that dog in my house of Kirkburn——’ he then went out.

‘Lord Fastcastle is a little moved,’ said Merton. ‘He comes of a wild stock, but I never saw him like this.’

Mr. Macrae allowed that the circumstances were unusual.

A horrible thought occurred to Merton. ‘Mr. Macrae,’ he exclaimed, ‘may I speak to you privately? Bude, I dare say, will be kind enough to remain with that person.’

Mr. Macrae followed Merton into the billiard-room.

‘My dear sir,’ said the pallid Merton, ‘Logan and I have made a terrible blunder! We never doubted that, if we caught anyone, our captive would be Blake. I do not deny that this man is his accomplice, but we have literally no proof. He may persist, if taken before a magistrate, that he is Giansi. He may say that, being in your employment as an electrician, he naturally entered the smoking-room when the electric bell rang. He can easily account for his possession of a revolver, in a place where a mysterious crime has just been committed. As to the Highland costume, he may urge that, like many Southrons, he had bought it to wear on a Highland tour, and was trying it on. How can you keep him? You have no longer the right of Pit and Gallows. Before what magistrate can you take him, and where? The sheriff-substitute may be at Golspie, or Tongue, or Dingwall, or I don’t know where. What can we do? What have we against the man? “Loitering with intent”? And here Logan and I have knocked him down, and tied him up, and Logan wanted to torture him.’

'Dear Mr. Merton,' replied Mr. Macrae, with paternal tenderness, 'you are overwrought. You have not slept all night. I must insist that you go to bed, and do not rise till you are called. The man is certainly guilty of conspiracy—that will be proved when the real Giansesi comes to hand. If not, I do not doubt that I can secure his silence. You forget the power of money. Make yourself easy, go to sleep; meanwhile I must re-establish communications. Good-night—golden slumbers!'

He wrung Merton's hand, and left him admiring the calm resolution of one whose conversation, 'in the mad pride of intellectuality,' he had recently despised. The millionaire, Merton felt, was worthy to be his daughter's father.

'The power of money!' mused Mr. Macrae; 'what is it in circumstances like mine? Surrounded by all the resources of science, I am baffled by a clever rogue, and in a civilised country the aid of the law and the police is as remote and inaccessible as in the Great Sahara! But to business!'

He sent for Benson, bade him, with some gillies, carry the prisoner into the dungeon of the old castle, loose his bonds, place food before him, and leave him in charge of the stalker. He informed Bude that breakfast would be ready at eight, and then retired to his study, where he matured his plans.

The yacht he would send to Lochinver to await the real Giansesi there, and to send telegrams descriptive of Blake in all directions. Giambresi must be telegraphed to again, and entreated to come in person, with yet another electric machine, for that brought by the false Giansesi had been, by the same envoy, rendered useless. A mounted man must be despatched to Lairg to collect vehicles and transport there, and to meet the real Giansesi if he came that way. Thus Mr. Macrae, with cool patience and forethought, endeavoured to recover his position, happy in the reflection that treachery had at last been eliminated. He did not forget to write telegrams to remote sheriff-substitutes and procurators fiscal.

As to the kidnappers, he determined to amuse them with protracted negotiations on the subject of his daughter's ransom. These would be despatched, of course, by the wireless engine which was in tune and touch with their own. During the parleyings the wretches might make some blunder, and Mr. Macrae could perhaps think out some plan for their detection and capture, without risk to his daughter. If not, he must pay ransom.

Having written out his orders and telegrams, Mr. Macrae

went downstairs to visit the stables. He gave his commands to his servants, and, as he returned, he met Logan, who had been on the watch for him.

'I am myself again, Mr. Macrae,' said Logan smiling. 'After all, we are living in the twentieth century, not the sixteenth, worse luck! And now can you give me your attention for a few minutes?'

'Willingly,' said Mr. Macrae, and they walked together to a point in the garden where they were secure from being overheard.

'I must ask you to lend me a horse to ride to Lairg and the railway at once,' said Logan.

'Must you leave us? You cannot, I fear, catch the 12.50 train south.'

'I shall take a special train if I cannot catch the one I want,' said Logan, adding, 'I have a scheme for baffling these miscreants and rescuing Miss Macrae, while disappointing them of the monstrous ransom which they are certain to claim. If you can trust me, you will enter into protracted negotiations with them on the matter through the wireless machine.'

'That I had already determined to do,' said the millionaire. 'But may I inquire what is your scheme?'

'Would it be asking too much to request you to let me keep it concealed, even from you? Everything depends on the most absolute secrecy. It must not appear that you are concerned—must not be suspected. My plan has been suggested to me by trifling indications which no one else has remarked. It is a plan which, I confess, appears wild, but what is *not* wild in this unhappy affair? Science, as a rule beneficent, has given birth to potentialities of crime which exceed the dreams of Oriental romance. But Science, like the spear of Achilles, can cure the wounds which herself inflicts.'

Logan spoke calmly, but eloquently, as every reader must observe. He was no longer the fierce Border baron of an hour ago, but the polished modern gentleman. The millionaire marked the change.

'Any further mystery cannot but be distasteful, Lord Fastcastle,' said Mr. Macrae.

'The truth is,' said Logan, 'that if my plan takes shape important persons and interests will be involved. I myself will be involved, and, for reasons both public and private, it seems to me in the last degree essential that you should in no way

appear; that you should be able, honestly, to profess entire ignorance. If I fail, I give you my word of honour that your position will be in no respect modified by my action. If I succeed——'

'Then you will indeed be my preserver,' said the millionaire.

'Not I, but my friend Mr. Merton,' said Logan, 'who, by the way, ought to accompany me. In Mr. Merton's genius for success in adventures entailing a mystery more dark, and personal dangers far greater, than those involved by my scheme (which is really quite safe), I have confidence based on large experience. To Merton alone I owe it that I am a married, a happy, and, speaking to anyone but yourself, I might say an affluent man. This adventure must be achieved, if at all, *auspice Merton*.'

'I also have much confidence in him, and I sincerely love him,' said Mr. Macrae, to the delight of Logan. He then paced silently up and down in deep thought. 'You say that your scheme involves you in no personal danger?' he asked.

'In none, or only in such as men encounter daily in several professions. Merton and I like it.'

'And you will not suffer in character if you fail?'

'Certainly not in character; no gentleman of my coat ever entered on an enterprise so free from moral blame,' said Logan, 'since my ancestor and namesake, Sir Robert, fell at the side of the good Lord James of Douglas, above the Heart of Bruce.'

He thrilled and changed colour as he spoke.

'Yet it would not do for *me* to be known to be connected with the enterprise?' asked Mr. Macrae.

'Indeed it would not! Your notorious opulence would arouse ideas in the public mind, ideas false, indeed, but fatally compromising.'

'I may not even subsidise the affair—put a million to Mr. Merton's account?'

'In no sort! Afterwards, *after* he succeeds, then I don't say: if Merton will consent; but that is highly improbable. I know my friend.'

Mr. Macrae sighed deeply and remained pensive. 'Well,' he answered at last, 'I accept your very gallant and generous proposal.'

'I am overjoyed!' said Logan. He had never been in such a big thing before.

'I shall order my best two horses to be saddled after breakfast,' said Mr. Macrae. 'You will bait at Inchnadampf.'

'Here is my address; this will always find me,' said Logan, writing rapidly on a leaf of his note-book. 'You will wire all news of your negotiations with the pirates to town, by the new wireless machine, when Giambresi brings it, and his firm in town will telegraph it on to me, at the address I gave you, *in cypher*. To save time, we must use a book cypher—we can settle it in the house in ten minutes,' said Logan, now entirely in his element.

They chose *The Bonnie Briar Bush*, by Mr. Ian Maclaren—a work too popular to excite suspicion; and arranged the method of secret correspondence with great rapidity. Logan then rushed up to Merton's room, hastily communicated the scheme to him, and overcame his objections—nay, awoke in him, by his report of Mr. Macrae's words, the hopes of a lover. They came down to breakfast, and arranged that their baggage should be sent after them as soon as communications were restored.

Merton contrived to have a brief interview with Lady Bude. Her joyous spirit shone in her eyes.

'I do not know what Lord Fastcastle's plan is,' she said, 'but I wish you good fortune. You have won the *father's* heart, and now I am about to be false to my sex,' she whispered—'the daughter's is all but your own! I can help you a little,' she added, and, after warmly clasping both her hands in his, Merton hurried to the front of the house, where the horses stood, and sprang into the saddle. No motors, no bicycles, no scientific vehicles to-day; the clean wind piped to him from the mountains; a good steed was between his thighs! Logan mounted, after entrusting Bouncer to Lady Bude, and they galloped eastwards.

VI. The Adventure of the '*Flora Macdonald*.'

'This is the point indicated, latitude so-and-so, longitude so-and-so,' said Mr. Macrae. 'But I do not see a sail or a funnel on the western horizon. Nothing since we left the Fleet behind us, far to the east. Yet it is the hour. It is strange!'

Mr. Macrae was addressing Bude. They stood together on the deck of the *Flora Macdonald*, the vast yacht of the millionaire. She was lying to on a sea as glassy and radiant, under a blazing August sun, as the Atlantic can show in her mildest moods. On the quarterdeck of the yacht were piled great iron boxes containing the millions in gold with which the millionaire

had at last consented to ransom his daughter. He had been negotiating with her captors through the wireless machine, and, as Logan could not promise any certain release, Mr. Macrae had finally surrendered, while informing Logan of the circumstances and details of his rendezvous with the kidnappers. The amassing of the gold had shaken the exchanges of two worlds. Banks trembled, rates were enormous, but the precious metal had been accumulated. The pirates would not take Mr. Macrae's cheque; bank notes they laughed at, the millions must be paid in gold. Now at last the gold was on the spot of ocean indicated by the kidnappers, but there was no sign of sail or ship, no promise of their coming. Men with telescopes in the rigging of the *Flora* were on the outlook in vain. They could pick up one of the floating giants of our fleet, far off to the east, but north, west and south were empty wastes of water.

'Three o'clock has come and gone. I hope there has been no accident,' said Mr. Macrae nervously. 'But where are those thieves?' He absently pressed his repeater: it tingled out the half-hour.

'It is odd,' said Bude. 'Hullo, look there—what's *that*?'

That was a slim spar, which suddenly shot from the plain of ocean, at a distance of a hundred yards. On its apex a small black hood twisted itself this way and that like a living thing; so tranquil was the hour that the spar with its dull hood was distinctly reflected in the mirror-like waters of the ocean.

'By gad, it is the periscope of a submarine!' said Bude.

There could not be a doubt of it. The invention of Napier of Merchistoun and of M. Jules Verne, now at last an actual engine of human warfare, had been employed by the kidnappers of the daughter of the millionaire!

A light flashed on the mind, steady and serviceable, but not brilliantly ingenious, of Mr. Macrae. 'This,' he exclaimed rather superfluously, 'accounts for the fiendish skill with which these miscreants took cover when pursued by the Marine Police. *This* explains the subtle art with which they dodged observation. Doubtless they had always, somewhere, a well-found normal yacht containing their supplies. Do you not agree with me, my lord?'

'In my opinion,' said Bude, 'you have satisfactorily explained what has so long puzzled us. But look! The periscope, having reconnoitred us, is sinking again!'

It was true. The slim spar gracefully descended to the abyss.

Again ocean smiled with innumerable laughters (as the Athenian sings)—smiled, empty, azure, effulgent! The *Flora Macdonald* was once more alone on a wide, wide sea!

Two slight jars were now just felt by the owner, skipper, and crew of the *Flora Macdonald*. 'What's that?' asked Mr. Macrae sharply. 'A reef?'

'In my opinion,' said the captain, 'the beggars in the submarine have torpedoed us. Attached mines to our keel, sir,' he explained, respectfully touching his cap and shifting the quid in his cheek. He was a bluff tar of the good old school.

'Merciful heavens!' exclaimed Mr. Macrae, his face paling. 'What can this new outrage mean? Here on our deck is the gold; if they explode their mines the bullion sinks to join the exhaustless treasures of the main!'

'A bit of bluff and blackmail on their part I fancy,' said Bude, lighting a cigarette.

'No doubt! No doubt!' said Mr. Macrae, rather unsteadily. 'They would never be such fools as to blow up the millions. Still, an accident might have awful results.'

'Look there, sir, if you please,' said the captain of the *Flora Macdonald*, 'there's that spar of theirs up again.'

It was so. The spar, the periscope, shot up on the larboard side of the yacht. After it had reconnoitred, the mirror of ocean was stirred into dazzling circling waves, and the deck of a submarine slowly emerged. The deck was long and flat, and of a much larger area than submarines in general have. It would seem to indicate the presence below the water of a body or hull of noble proportions. A voice hailed the yacht from the submarine, though no speaker was visible.

'You have no consort?' the voice yelled.

'For ten years I have been a widower,' replied Mr. Macrae, his voice trembling with emotion.

'Most sorry to have unintentionally awakened unavailing regrets,' came the voice. 'But I mean, honour bright, you have no attendant armed vessel?'

'None—I promised you so,' said Mr. Macrae; 'I am a man of my word. Come on deck if you doubt me and look for yourself.'

'Not me, and get shot by a rifleman,' said the voice.

'It is very distressing to be distrusted in this manner,' replied Mr. Macrae. 'Captain McClosky,' he said to the skipper, 'pray request all hands to oblige me by going below.'

The captain issued this order, which the yacht's crew rather reluctantly obeyed. Their interest and curiosity were strongly excited by a scene without precedent in the experience of the oldest mariner.

When they had disappeared Mr. Macrae again addressed the invisible owner of the voice. 'All my crew are below. Nobody is on deck but Captain McClosky, the Earl of Bude, and myself. We are entirely unarmed. You can see for yourself.'

The owner of the voice replied, 'You have no torpedoes?'

'We have only the armament agreed upon by you to protect this immense mass of bullion from the attacks of the indelicate,' said Mr. Macrae. 'I take heaven to witness that I am honourably observing every article of our agreement, as *per* yours of August 21.'

'All right,' answered the voice. 'I dare say you are honest. But I may as well tell you *this*—that while passing under your yacht we attached two slabs of gun-cotton to her keel. The knob connected with them is under my hand. We placed them where they are, not necessarily for publication—explosion, I mean—but merely as a guarantee of good faith. You understand?'

'Perfectly,' said Mr. Macrae, 'though I regard your proceeding as a fresh and unmerited insult.'

'Merely a precaution usual in business,' said the voice. 'And now,' it went on, 'for the main transaction. You will lower your gold into boats, row it across, and dump it here on my deck. When it is all there, *and* has been inspected by me, you will send one boat rowed by *two men only*, into which Miss Macrae shall be placed and sent back to you. When that has been done we shall part, I hope, on friendly terms and with mutual respect.'

'Captain McClosky,' said Mr. Macrae, 'will you kindly pipe all hands on deck to discharge cargo?'

The captain obeyed.

Mr. Macrae turned to Bude. 'This is a moment,' he said, 'which tries a father's heart! Presently I must see Emmeline, hear her voice, clasp her to my breast.'

Bude mutely wrung the hand of the millionaire, and turned away to conceal his emotion. Seldom, perhaps never, has a father purchased back an only and beloved child at such a cost as Mr. Macrae was now paying without a murmur.

The boats of the *Flora Macdonald* were lowered and manned, the winches slowly swung each huge box of the precious metal

aboard the boats. Mr. Macrae entrusted the keys of the gold-chests to his officers.

‘Remember,’ cried the voice from the submarine, ‘we must have the gold on board, inspected, and weighed, before we return Miss Macrae.’

‘Mean to the last,’ whispered the millionaire to the earl; but aloud he only said, ‘Very well; I regret, for your own sake, your suspicious character, but, in the circumstances, I have no choice.’

To Bude he added, ‘This is terrible! When he has secured the bullion he may submerge his submarine and go off, without returning my daughter.’

This was so manifestly true that Bude could only shake his head and mutter something about ‘honour among thieves.’

The crew got the gold on board the boats, and, after several journeys, had the boxes piled on the deck of the submarine.

When they had placed the boxes on board they again retired, and one of the men of the submarine, who seemed to be in command, and wore a mask, coolly weighed the glittering metal on the deck, returning each package, after weighing and inspection, to its coffer. The process was long and tedious; at length it was completed.

Then at last the form of Miss Macrae, in an elegant and tasteful yachting costume, appeared on the deck of the submarine. The boat’s crew of the *Flora Macdonald* (by whom she was adored) lifted their oars and cheered. The masked pirate in command guided her into a boat of the *Flora’s* with stately courtesy, placing in her hand a bouquet of the rarest orchids. He then laid his hand on his heart, and bowed with a grace remarkable in one of his trade. This man was no vulgar desperado.

The crew pulled off, and at that moment, to the horror of all who were on the *Flora’s* deck, two slight jars again thrilled through her from stem to stern.

Mr. Macrae and Bude gazed on each other with ashen faces. What had occurred? But still the boat’s crew pulled gallantly towards the *Flora*, and, in a few moments, Miss Macrae stepped on deck, and was in her father’s arms. It was a scene over which art cannot linger. Self-restraint was thrown to the winds; the father and child acted as if no eyes were regarding them. Miss Macrae sobbed convulsively, her sire was shaken by long-pent emotion. Bude had averted his gaze: he looked towards the

submarine, on the deck of which the crew were busy, beginning to lower the bullion into the interior.

To Bude's extreme and speechless amazement, *another periscope* arose from ocean at about fifty yards from the further side of the submarine! Bude spoke no word; the father and daughter were absorbed in each other; the crew had no eyes but for them.

Presently, unmarked by the busy seamen of the hostile submarine, the platform and look-out hood of *another submarine* appeared. The new boat seemed to be pointing directly for the middle of the hostile submarine and at right angles to it.

'*Hands up!*' pealed a voice from the second submarine.

It was the voice of Merton!

At the well-known sound Miss Macrae tore herself from her father's embrace and hurried below. She deemed that a fond illusion of the senses had beguiled her.

Mr. Macrae looked wildly towards the two submarines.

The masked captain of the hostile vessel, leaping up, shook his fist at the *Flora Macdonald* and yelled, 'Damn your foolish treachery, you money-grubbing hunks! You *have* a consort.'

'I assure you that nobody is more surprised than myself,' cried Mr. Macrae.

'One minute more and you, your ship, and your crew will be sent to your own place!' yelled the masked captain.

He vanished below, doubtless to explode the mines under the *Flora*.

Bude crossed himself; Mr. Macrae, folding his arms, stood calm and defiant on his deck. One sailor (the cook) leaped overboard in terror, the others hastily drew themselves up in a double line, to die like Britons.

A minute passed, a minute charged with terror. Mr. Macrae took out his watch to mark the time. Another minute passed, and no explosion.

The captain of the pirate vessel reappeared on her deck. He cast his hands desperately abroad; his curses, happily, were unheard by Miss Macrae, who was below.

'Hands up!' again rang out the voice of Merton, adding, 'if you begin to submerge your craft, if she stirs an inch, I send you skyward—at least as a preliminary measure. My diver has detached your mines from the keel of the *Flora Macdonald* and has cut the wires leading to them; my bow-tube is pointing directly for you—if I press the switch the torpedo must go home, and then heaven have mercy on your souls!'

A crow of laughter arose from the yachtsmen of the *Flora Macdonald*, who freely launched terms of maritime contempt at the crew of the pirate submarine, with comments on the probable future of the souls to which Merton had alluded.

On his deck the masked captain stood silent. 'We have women on board!' he answered Merton at last.

'You may lower them in a collapsible boat, if you have one,' answered Merton. 'But, on the faintest suspicion of treachery—the faintest surmise, mark you, I switch on my torpedo.'

'What are your terms?' asked the pirate captain.

'The return of the bullion, that is all,' replied the voice of Merton. 'I give you two minutes to decide.'

Before a minute and a half had passed the masked captain had capitulated. 'I climb down,' he said.

'The boats of the *Flora* will come for it,' said Merton; 'your men will help to load it in the boats. Look sharp, and be civil—no more blasphemies—or I blow you out of the water!'

The pirates had no choice; rapidly, if sullenly, they effected the transfer.

When all was done, when the coffers had been hoisted aboard the *Flora Macdonald*, Merton, for the first time, hailed the yacht:

'Will you kindly send a boat round here for me, Mr. Macrae, if you do not object to my joining you on the return voyage?'

Mr. Macrae shouted a welcome, the yacht's crew cheered as only Britons can. Mr. Macrae's piper struck up the pibroch of the clan, '*A' the wild McCraws are coming!*'

'If any of you scoundrels shoot,' cried Merton to his enemies, 'up you will all go. You shall stay here, after we depart, in front of that torpedo, just as long as the skipper of my vessel pleases.'

Meanwhile the boat of the *Flora* approached the friendly submarine; Merton stepped aboard, and soon was on the deck of the *Flora Macdonald*.

Mr. Macrae welcomed him with all the joy of a father re-united to his daughter, of a capitalist restored to his millions.

Bude shook Merton's hand warmly, exclaiming, 'Well played, old boy!'

Merton's eyes eagerly searched the deck for one beloved form. Mr. Macrae drew him aside. 'Emmeline is below,' he whispered; 'you will find her in the saloon.' Merton looked stedfastly at the

millionaire, who smiled with unmistakable meaning. The lover hurried down the companion, while the *Flora*, which had rapidly got up steam, sped eastward.

Merton entered the saloon, his heart beating as hard as when he had sought his beloved among the bracken beneath the cliffs at Castle Skrae. She rose at his entrance; their eyes met—Merton's dim with a supreme doubt, Emmeline's frank and clear. A blush dawned divinely over the white rose of her face, her lips curved in the resistless Æginetan smile, and, without a word spoken, the twain were in each other's arms.

Half an hour later Mr. Macrae, heralding his arrival with a sonorous 'Hem!' entered the saloon. Smiling, he embraced his daughter, who hid her head on his ample shoulder, while with his right hand the father grasped that of Merton.

'My daughter is restored to me—and my son,' said the millionaire softly.

There was silence. Mr. Macrae was the first to recover his self-possession. 'Sit down, dear,' he said, gently disengaging Emmeline, 'and tell me all about it. Who were the wretches? I can forgive them now.'

Miss Macrae's eyes were bent on the carpet; she seemed reluctant to speak. At last, in timid and faltering accents, she whispered, 'It was the Van Huytens boy.'

'Rudolph Van Huytens! I might have guessed it,' cried the millionaire. 'His motive is too plain! His wealth did not equal mine by several millions. The ransom which he demanded, and but for Tom here' (he indicated Merton) 'would now possess, exactly reversed our relative financial positions. Carrying on his father's ambition, he would, but for Tom, have held the world's record for opulence. The villain!'

'You do not flatter *me*, father,' said Miss Macrae, 'and you are unjust to Mr. Van Huytens. He had another, *he* said a stronger, motive—Me!' she murmured, blushing like a red rose, and adding, 'He really was rather nice. The submarine was tolerable; the yacht delightful. His sisters and his aunt were very kind. But——' and the beautiful girl looked up archly and shyly at Merton.

'In fact, if it had not been for Tom,' Mr. Macrae was exclaiming, when Emmeline laid her lily hand on his lips, and again hid her burning blushes on his shoulder.

'So Rudolph had no chance?' asked Mr. Macrae gaily.

'I used rather to like him, long ago—before——' murmured Emmeline.

A thrill of happy pride passed through Merton. He also, he remembered, of old had thought that he loved. But now he privately registered an oath that he would never make any confessions as to the buried past (a course which the chronicler earnestly recommends to young and affianced readers).

'Now tell us all about your adventures, Emmie,' said Mr. Macrae, sitting down and taking his daughter's hand in his own.

The narrative may have been anticipated. After Blake was felled, Miss Macrae, screaming and struggling, had been carried to the boat. The crew had rapidly pulled round the cliff, the submarine had risen, to the captive's horrified amazement, from the deep, she had been taken on board, and, yet more to her surprise, had been welcomed by the Misses Van Huytens and their aunt. The brother had always behaved with respect, till, finding that his suit was hopeless, he had avoided her presence as much as possible, and——

'Gone for the dollars,' said Mr. Macrae.

They had wandered from rocky desert isle to desert isle, in the archipelago of the Hebrides, meeting at night with a swift attendant yacht. Usually they had slept on shore under canvas; the corrugated iron houses had been left behind at 'The Seven Hunters,' with the champagne, to alleviate the anxiety of Mr. Macrae. Ample supplies of costume and other necessities for Miss Macrae had always been at hand.

'They really did me very well,' she said smiling, 'but I was miserable about *you*,' and she embraced her father.

'Only about *me*?' asked Mr. Macrae.

'I did not know—I was not sure,' said Emmeline, crying a little, and laughing rather hysterically.

'You go and lie down, my dear,' said Mr. Macrae. 'Your maid is in your cabin,' and thither he conducted the overwrought girl, Merton anxiously following her with his eyes.

'We are neglecting Lord Bude,' said Mr. Macrae. 'Come on deck, Tom, and tell us how you managed that delightful surprise.'

'Oh, pardon me, sir,' said Merton, 'I am under oath—I am solemnly bound to Logan and others never to reveal the circumstances. It was necessary to keep you uninformed, that you might honourably make your arrangement to meet Mr. Van Huytens without being aware that you had a submarine consort.'

Logan takes any dishonour on himself, and he wished to offer Mr. Van Huytens—as that is his name—every satisfaction, but I dissuaded him. His connection with the affair cannot be kept too secret. Though Logan put me forward, you really owe all to *him*.’

‘But without *you*, I should never have had his aid,’ said Mr. Macrae. ‘Where *is* Lord Fastcastle?’ he asked.

‘In the friendly submarine,’ said Merton.

‘Oh, I think I can guess!’ said Mr. Macrae smiling. ‘I shall ask no more questions. Let us join Lord Bude.’

If the reader is curious as to how the rescue was managed, it is enough to say that Logan was the cousin and intimate friend of Admiral Chirnside, that the Admiral was commanding a fleet engaged in naval manœuvres around the north coast, that he had a flotilla of submarines, one of which Logan borrowed, and that the point of ocean where the pirates met the *Flora Macdonald* was not far west of the Orkneys.

On deck Bude asked Merton how Logan (for he knew that Logan was the guiding spirit) had guessed the secret of the pirate submarine.

‘Do you remember,’ said Merton, ‘that when you came back from “The Seven Hunters,” you reported that the fishermen had a silly story of seeing a dragon flying above the empty sea?’

‘I remember, *un dragon volant*,’ said Bude.

‘And Logan asked you not to tell Mr. Macrae?’

‘Yes, but I don’t understand.’

‘A dragon is the Scotch word for a kite—not the bird—a boy’s kite. You did not know; I did not know, but Mr. Macrae would have known, being a Scot, and Logan wanted to keep his plan dark; and the kite had let him into the secret of the submarine.’

‘I still don’t see how.’

‘Why, the submarine must have been flying a kite, with a pendent wire, to catch messages from Blake and the wireless machine at Castle Skrae. How else could a kite—“a dragon,” the sailor said—have been flying above the empty sea?’

‘Logan is rather sharp,’ said Bude.

‘But, Mr. Macrae,’ asked Merton, ‘how about the false Giancesi?’

‘Oh, when Giambresi came of course we settled *his* business. We had him tight, as a conspirator. He had been met, when expelled for misdeeds from Giancesi and Giambresi’s, by a beautiful young man, to whom he sold himself. He believed the beautiful young man to be the devil, but of course it was our

friend Blake. *He*, in turn, must have been purchased by Van Huytens while he was lecturing in America as a poet-Fenian. In fact, he really had a singular genius for electric engineering; he had done very well at some German university. But he was a fellow of no principle! We are well quit of a rogue. I turned his unlucky victim, the false Giancesi, loose, with money enough for life to keep him honest if he chooses. His pension stops if ever a word of the method of rescue comes out. The same with my crew; they shall all be rich men, for their station, *till* the tale is whispered and reaches my ears. In that case—all pensions stop. I think we can trust the crew of the friendly submarine to keep their own counsel.'

'Certainly!' said Merton. 'Wealth has its uses after all,' he thought in his heart.

Merton and Logan gave a farewell dinner in autumn to the Disentanglers—to such of them as were still unmarried. In her napkin each lady of the Society found a cheque on Coutts for 25,000*l.* signed with the magic name of Ronald Macrae.

The millionaire had insisted on being allowed to perform this act of munificence, the salvage for the recovered millions, he said.

Miss Martin, after dinner, carried Mr. Macrae's health in a toast. In a humorous speech she announced her own approaching nuptials, and intimated that she had the permission of the other ladies present to make the same general confession for all of them.

'Like every novel of my own,' said Miss Martin smiling, 'this enterprise of the Disentanglers has a

HAPPY ENDING.'

A Botanical Discovery and its Possibilities.

IT does not often fall to the lot of the botanist to announce a sensational discovery, but this piece of good fortune happened to Professor Hellriegel, of Germany, when, in 1886, he gave out to the world that he and his colleague, Professor Wilfarth, had discovered the meaning and use of the little nodules which are to be found scattered about upon the roots of leguminous plants—plants such as clover, peas, lupins, and beans.

Now, anyone who has washed away the soil from the rootlets of a clover or a pea, and then carefully examined them, knows that at various points little lumps or nodules occur; yet, often as these curious little lumps had been previously noticed, no one, up to that time, had suggested that they were other than simply peculiar formations of the tissues of the root and rootlets. Hellriegel, however, had not been satisfied with this supposition, and, some years previous to 1886, he had commenced a patient investigation into the matter, and, after much experiment and research, he had learnt two most interesting facts about them: one concerning their true nature; the second, the part they play in the economy of the plant. And, in learning these two facts, he illuminated a hitherto almost unknown side of plant life. In the first place, he found that these nodules or tubercles are nothing less than the homes of colonies of bacteria, which live and flourish in the shelter of the tissues of their host—that, in fact, in the leguminous plants we have an instance of two organisms—one relatively very large, the Plant, the other very minute, the Bacterium—living together in harmonious unity, each benefiting the other and being benefited in return. We can readily understand the benefit the bacteria derive from their sheltered position within the roots, but it is by no means obvious how they can repay the debt they thus incur; and the fact that

they do benefit their hosts in an extraordinary way calls to mind the old fable of the mouse and the lion. And the mere discovery that such a condition of things was possible—that bacteria should normally live upon the roots of healthy plants—brought in totally new ideas, and the suggestion opened up a completely fresh point of view.

Now, for a long time before this discovery was made one striking fact about leguminous crops had been well known to farmers—namely, that while all other crops impoverished the land upon which they were produced, by taking nitrogenous matter out of the soil, and necessitating the application of more or less costly nitrogenous manures to bring the land back to its productiveness, yet this was not the case when such crops as clover, peas, beans, and so forth were grown. These crops, far from impoverishing the land, actually enriched it. Though they ran their course and grew from seed to maturity, and stem, leaves, and flowers were all formed in abundance, yet they actually left the land richer than they found it. Far from drawing upon the soil for nitrogen (as necessary to them for building up their tissues as to all other plants), they obtained what they wanted from some unknown source, and, in addition, handed on generously to the soil. But how this power—almost that of a magician—was exercised, neither the farmer nor the botanist pretended to explain. For it had been long accepted as an undoubted physiological fact that no green plants are able to digest 'raw' nitrogen: though nitrogen is an absolute necessity to them, they must have it presented to them in some combination or another, or they cannot utilise it; hence the atmosphere, apparently one of the most obvious sources of nitrogen, is a sealed enclosure to them, for, though nitrogen exists in great quantities in it, it does not exist in combination there to any appreciable extent. Therefore their only chance of obtaining this necessary article of daily life is to take it out of the soil, where it abounds in forms suitable for plants to use.

Though this belief is perfectly founded upon fact, yet Hellriegel showed, in the second part of his discovery, that leguminous green plants—the peas, the beans, the clovers, and so forth—have found a way out of the difficulty, and manage to tap the air around them for their supplies of nitrogen. They have called to their aid these bacteria, which possess the power of taking in free nitrogen, and in some mysterious manner have encouraged them to form colonies upon their roots, so that they can act as inter-

mediaries in the matter. The bacteria take in the nitrogen from the air in the interstices of the soil; in their nodule root-dwellings they work it up into various complex compounds, and these they pass on to the plant through the tissues of the root, and the plant builds up its whole organism with these manufactured materials as basis. Therefore these green plants, through the medium of the bacteria, have an inexhaustible source of nitrogen supplies; and it at once becomes plain why beans, furnished with the nodules and drawing upon the air for their nitrogen, can actually enrich the soil in which they grow, while oats, not provided with them, and having to look to the soil for all supplies, must necessarily impoverish it.

This explanation of Hellriegel's opened a new field of inquiry, and many possibilities as to the best ways in which the new knowledge could be turned to advantage suggested themselves both to scientific men in their laboratories and to practical agriculturists who took an intelligent interest in scientific matters. It was obvious that in leguminous crops lay a mine of wealth to the farmer, for they were profitable not only for economic value when grown, but also to the soil in growing. Still, it was also obvious that it was only when they were well provided with bacteria visitors that they possessed these unusual powers. If the tubercles failed to appear, then leguminous crops were no better than any others, and had to fall back upon the resources of the soil instead of contributing to them. It was therefore suggested that the reason why poor, badly nourished leguminous crops were found in some localities was because the soil of those localities did not harbour the necessary bacteria in sufficient quantity, if at all. And, anyway, the whole question was worthy of further serious consideration.

So, ten years later, in 1896, Dr. Nobbe, of Tharand in Saxony, came forward with an ingenious suggestion that evoked considerable interest in the agricultural world. His plan was to inoculate soil poor in these bacteria, and on which it was desired to improve the crops, with cultures of the necessary bacterium. The first method he tried was simple but cumbersome. He looked out for a field on which had been growing very flourishing leguminous plants whose roots showed an abundance of nodules. Having found it, he took soil (presumably containing the coveted bacteria) away from it, and spread it thinly over a field where the leguminous crops had hitherto been poor. Then he re-sowed the strewn field with seed. Rain intermingled the two soils, and the

results came up to his expectations, for the crop that now appeared was greatly superior to all previous ones; the plants were finer in themselves and much more plentiful, and there were many nodules on their roots, proving that the new plants had quickly availed themselves, to their own material advantage, of the services of the bacteria thus introduced to them.

Successful so far, Dr. Nobbe next turned his attention to making more feasible the process of introducing these bacteria to desirable plots of ground; for, naturally, if their introduction always involved heavy cartage of soil, possibly for long distances, it would offer an insuperable practical difficulty to their frequent employment. So he set about making cultures or preparations of these bacteria after the manner known to bacteriologists, whereby large quantities of the microbe were compressed into the compass of a mere bottle. These preparations, to which was given the name of 'Nitragin,' were made directly from the bacteria nodules upon the roots; and once prepared in the laboratory, the process was next handed over to a firm of well-known German chemists for preparation on a commercial scale. Subsequent experience proved that slightly different cultures were best, according as the crop to be treated was clover, peas, vetches, &c.; for apparently the bacteria which serve one species are not precisely those which serve another.

Nitragin thus prepared can be used in two ways. The first way reminds us of Dr. Nobbe's original plan. By it the nitragin—a powder—is moistened with water not absolutely cold, and then poured over a quantity of soil. This soil is spread thinly and evenly over the field, and is then deeply harrowed in, and in this prepared soil the seed is sown. This is known as 'Soil Inoculation.'

The second way is probably easier and better. After being moistened as before, the nitragin is sprinkled over the seed which is to be sown. The seed is then shaken in loam or dry sand, and immediately sown. Then, whenever the seed germinates and puts forth its baby root, it finds bacteria already there at hand waiting for the shelter and protection of its tissues. This second method is known as 'Seed Inoculation.'

Now, though the whole principle of the nature and use of nitragin appears to be thoroughly reliable and scientific, and the preliminary tests were all that could be desired, yet it must be confessed that the experiments carried on in England with these bacterial preparations do not seem to have been successful.

When two plots of earth were taken, and one was treated with nitragin and the other left in its natural state, and then both plots were sown with identical seed the difference between the crops was not sufficiently marked (if, indeed, it was marked at all) to say that the plot treated with nitragin had any great advantage over the plot not so treated. Still, as Professor Somerville, writing with regard to the North of England, remarks, 'This does not, of course, show that leguminous plants can get along without bacteria, but it would appear to indicate that these bacteria are usually present in soils in sufficient abundance to make artificial inoculation unnecessary.'

When, however, we turn to some experiments which have been going on during the past two or three years in Canada, we have presented to us some very interesting results which seem to point to a distinct future for this method of treatment. These experiments began in 1897, at the State Experimental Farm at Ottawa, and clover, peas, and horse-beans were the plants experimented on. The soil used in the experiments was specially made for the purpose from sand, clay, and 'swamp muck,' and was very poor in quality. In the first year three sets of each kind of seed were sown—one set in the soil which had not been treated with nitragin in any way, the second set in soil which had been sprinkled with a solution of the bacterial preparation (soil inoculation), the third set in soil untreated as in the first, though the seeds themselves had been moistened with the diluted nitragin before being planted (seed inoculation). At first large iron pots were used to contain the various soils and crops, but later on experiments were also made in small plots of ground.

During the three years 1897, 1898, 1899, these experiments were carried out successfully and constant observations made. The net result with all the crops was that those to which the bacteria had been introduced were far superior to those to which they had not been brought. The reports of the various stages give us much important matter for thought. With reference to the clover, it was noticed at the end of the first year that the weight of the crop from the soil inoculated, and also that from the seed-inoculated plants, exceeded the weight of the crop grown without nitragin, and that this increase was chiefly due to the greater development of the roots. There was also considerably more nitrogenous matter in the treated crop than in the untreated, though this was not due to any part of the plant containing more nitrogenous matter than usual in its tissues, but

because the plants were more flourishing, and therefore produced more root, stem, and leaves. The trials further showed that the best results of all came from seed inoculation rather than from soil sprinkling. The second year, therefore, only two sets of clover plants were grown, one of which had not had any of the bacteria introduced to it in any form whatever, while the other had had its seed inoculated before being sown. The results confirmed the previous year's observation in a very gratifying way, for the plants from the inoculated seed were much more luxuriant than those from the untreated seed. The third year was even more interesting: the plants of the second year had been left growing and had survived the winter, so there was no further treatment of the soil, and, of course, no further sowing of seed. During the spring 'both series made excellent growth, but the plants from the inoculated seed were very much larger.' This is probably due to the fact that the treated plants were by this time much the more largely endowed with bacteria nodules both as to size and number. So striking, indeed, was the result that a photograph, taken of the plants as they grew, testifies unmistakably to the superiority of the one over the other.

As with clover, so with peas. Direct seed inoculation proved more efficacious than soil sprinkling, probably because the bacteria were more 'on the spot.' The plants to which the bacteria had been introduced through the medium of the nitragin were invariably finer than those left untouched, while the little nodules on their roots were present in far greater numbers. The beans confirmed the evidence tendered by peas and clovers during the first two years, but the third year the experiment was a failure, due, in the investigators' opinion, to the preparation of the bacteria having its vitality impaired before being used, and thus proving nothing against its intrinsic value.

Reviewing their work for the three years, the experimenters say: 'The results are . . . eminently satisfactory, furnishing evidence of a marked character as to the value of this inoculating agent. . . . There seems, indeed, no doubt, from these data, but that when fresh nitragin is employed we are furnishing the legumes with bacteria of unimpaired vitality that will enable them, under favourable conditions of soil as regards moisture, warmth, and a supply of mineral food, to assimilate free nitrogen.'

Yet, notwithstanding its value, it is by no means certain that nitragin, in its present form, will ever be commonly used as an improver of crops. For the bacteria composing it are very sus-

ceptible to external influences, and if these are not exactly what they require they quickly die, and the preparation becomes valueless. For instance, if nitragin is kept more than six weeks from the date of its preparation, it is very likely to become worthless; this in itself is a great barrier to its being extensively used by farmers, particularly by those in out-of-the-way districts, who are most likely to be in need of it. Further, if it is exposed to too strong a light, or the bottles containing it are kept in too warm a temperature (over 100° F.), the value is greatly impaired. These disadvantages are, however, common to most bacterial preparations. And though, perhaps, nitragin is not yet a commercial success, this is of no moment in comparison with the undoubted truths it has helped to establish. Let us recapitulate them.

From Hellriegel's discovery we obtain a new and startling view of possibilities which may be lying all unsuspected beneath the common well-worn facts of plant life. We learn that bacteria may play a definite part in the course of plant development, even as they do in the course of human life, and that through this community life—this symbiotic union—plants may be endowed with powers which otherwise would be far from them. From the later experiments we further learn that we can manipulate these bacteria; that we can introduce them to certain plants; and that we can, by inoculating a seed, affect the after-development of that seed and stimulate it in various directions, just as by inoculating an animal we can produce certain definite and distinct results. But it must be remembered that the whole question of seed inoculation is still in its veriest infancy, and we cannot yet even indicate the length to which it may be carried. Though it has only been applied, at present, to certain leguminous plants, yet we cannot venture to think that these are its limits. How far bacteria and plant life may prove to be interdependent, and whether it will not be possible to introduce bacteria to plants other than leguminous ones, and thus enable them to tap the vast source of atmospheric nitrogen, are problems yet to be solved. We cannot believe the matter will rest where it is.

G. CLARKE-NUTTALL.

A Brilliant Feat of Arms.

A CONSTANT traveller to the West of England by Basingstoke and Salisbury can hardly fail to notice, within a mile or so of the former town, a small village consisting of ancient brick and oak beam cottages with thatched roofs, a charming mill house with sleepy pool, and a large church chiefly of the Perpendicular style. This village, through which the railway passes, is what remains of Old Basing, a place that has played its part in English history. Basingstoke, a brisk market-town, is growing rather quickly, but scarcely in the direction of Old Basing, which is not likely therefore to be absorbed by its wide-awake neighbour. The head-waters of the Loddon are near by, deep among willow-herb and loose-strife; and here the canal from Basingstoke to Aldershot, which passes through the village, is clear almost as a chalk stream. For me the place has a charm born of intimacy with its restfulness, its wild life close at hand—there are, for those who know where to look for them, ciril-buntings and marsh fritillary butterflies and sky-blue succory flowers, and still, it may be, the Calathian violets of deepest gentian colour. There are shy, hidden villages; elmy lanes; ancient churches, with here something of a Norman doorway or an Early English arch—perhaps the most uplifting of any of the great, simple features of the English Gothic; and there, some remnant of a Mediæval brass which escaped, in part at any rate, the villain hands of Hugh Peters and the church-wreckers. But the glory of Basing must always be that great mound, shaded by old trees, which lies to the left of the church. It can be seen from the railway, but it is only when one has come to know the geography of the place that, whilst travelling, one can distinguish even in summer through the trees some fragments of the ruined house or castle that lie about its summit. The long defence of Basing House for Charles I., and its storming by Cromwell, who burst in ‘like a fire flood’ in October 1645, is one of the most moving episodes

of the Civil War. The 'proper motto' of the Paulets, 'Ayez Loyaute,' borne out to the doom; the lofty character of the great Paulet; the stern, serene replies he sent to those who bade him surrender; the boast—which was hardly a boast, being too noble for that—that if the King had no more ground in England than this, his own house, he would yet adventure it to the uttermost—these have served to throw a glamour over the story of the siege. One wishes that when the two strong men met, Cromwell and Paulet, there had been an onlooker with the eye and imagination that can set such a scene on paper: it must have been one of the most memorable meetings in the history of that war.

Though Gardiner, through the mass of weightier material, could do no more than touch upon the Civil War in Hampshire, the siege has been written of by one or two trustworthy local historians; and, besides, we have *A Description of the Siege of Basing Castle*, from the pen of a great lady, Honora de Burgh, the Marquis's second wife. It can be obtained from Mr. Jacob, of Basingstoke, who published it some years ago, and I advise everybody who is interested in the story to read it.

The siege and storming of Basing, then, have received some attention, but the relief of the house by Colonel (afterwards Sir Henry) Gage, in September 1644, has been quite overlooked by modern writers, though the references to it in Clarendon point to a brilliant feat of arms. It was an action that might have added to the fame of a Condé. The hero of it, even after we have made allowances for the flowery language of his seventeenth-century biographer, stands out as one of the most resourceful and accomplished soldiers of his day.

Henry Gage was born about 1597, and came of a good stock, the Gages of Haling, in Surrey. Whilst young he travelled in France, Flanders, Germany, and Italy, studying philosophy with zeal in the last country under Piccolomini. He settled upon arms as his profession whilst on his travels, and studied the art of war in several countries. 'But least you may judge,' says Walsingham, 'that of his Travayles he made onely a present delight, and fed his Curiosity, I must assure you his observation was so strong and punctuall, that all men did admire the exact account he was able to render of all things deserving serious memory.' At twenty-two Gage entered the Spanish service, and was engaged at Antwerp. He had a troop at the siege of Bergen-op-Zoom in 1622, and both here and at Breda he distinguished

himself. Most of his leisure Gage gave up to the theory of war. Yet he was far from being an unlettered man outside his vocation. He had knowledge of heraldry, he translated a Latin account of the siege of Breda into English, and it is said he knew a little Greek. Clarendon says he spoke French, Spanish, Dutch, and Italian fluently; though Walsingham admits that 'in Dutch he was not elegant.' He served Spain for twelve years in the Netherlands, and was captain-commandant of an English regiment. How much more than a mere soldier of fortune, or a mercenary adventurer tinged with the failings of the Dugald Dalgetty type,¹ Gage was, is shown by his conduct when the Civil War broke out. In Flanders, Gage instantly flung his influence on the King's side, to which he was greatly attached, and prevented strong reinforcements of men and arms going to England for the Parliament. But this did not content him. He resolved to fight for the King. Wealth and sure preferment awaited him in Flanders. He gave these up, and, it seems, left wife and family in order to aid his party in England. Whether when, later on, he was made Governor of Oxford in succession to Sir Arthur Ashton, his wife and children were able to join him is not related, but we have it that his affection for them was great. There is, by-the-by, a charming story of the way in which his lady-love, Mistress Mary Daniell, resolved that if she changed her name it must be to take that of Gage: I commend it to the notice of the writer of historical romance.

In England Gage had not long to wait for work after his own heart. In 1644, when the Lords of the Council, during Charles's absence from Oxford, wished to stop the harassing excursions from Bostal House on the Buckinghamshire border, they fixed on Gage to carry out their plan. In June, with three pieces of cannon and a troop of horse, he marched to Bostal and speedily reduced it to submission. In the late summer of 1644, whilst Gage was in Oxford assisting in a military capacity the Governor, Sir Arthur Ashton, the position of Basing House became critical. The King, in his march to the West, had not turned aside to raise the siege, and now the Lords of the Council were anxious to help Paulet. They wished Gage to do the work, but Ashton, who had come heartily to dislike his subordinate, strongly opposed. He

¹ Being reproached on a certain occasion for giving away 40s. out of the 45s. he possessed to a decayed gentleman, he replied, 'When I begin to love money, I shall desist to be any more a Souldier, for he that loves money loves his life, and by consequence, fearing danger, is unfit to be employ'd in any gallant Action.'

insisted that the difficulty and risk were so great that no soldier who understood command would undertake the work. Gage pressed the Lords to appoint him. He recognised the risk of such a service, 'especially for the return,' but was eager to set out provided he was given a troop or two of good horse. The Lords of the Council, putting aside the envious objections of Ashton, determined to send Gage with such a force as he asked for.

At ten on Monday night, September 9, 1644, Gage started. Basing was forty miles distant; the enemy were strongly posted at Abingdon, Reading, and Newbury; their horse patrolled the whole country about those towns. Gage's force consisted of some 400 musquetiers and 250 horse. At Wallingford an additional 100 men, foot and horse, in charge of Captain Walters joined. Twelve barrels of powder and 1,200 pounds' weight of match were taken to strengthen Basing House. Gage seemed to start with small chance of success. His skill was great, the mettle of his men undoubted. Yet he might reasonably have felt more confident had he a force such as his Flanders regiment, colonel and men thoroughly knowing one another. We may imagine how efficient that regiment was, for, in peace as in war, it was Gage's aim to train his men constantly, so that they might become experts: such a training was even to be a 'recreation' for them.

Gage's plan was clearly to reach Basing by forced marches; to move as much as possible by night; to prefer the by-ways; to strike a swift and crushing blow at Norton's force before his movement was noised abroad. Secrecy was essential, and the men wore orange tawny colours to deceive any Parliamentary soldiers they might fall in with. The way was by Wallingford, Chawlsey (the Cholsey of to-day), thence to Aldermaston, and across the Berkshire border into Hampshire. Roughly, Chawlsey would be about half-way to Basing, and here Gage stopped on Tuesday morning to refresh his men.¹ He sent forward a messenger to Ogle, the Governor of Winchester Castle, who had promised the Lords of the Council 100 horse and 300 foot at any time to help to raise the siege of Basing. Ogle's men were to attack the rear of the enemy's quarters between four and five o'clock on Wednesday morning, whilst the Oxford force fell upon the front, and Paulet made sallies.

¹ Clarendon says they rested in a wood near Wallingford; Gage mentions Chawlsey.

The second stage of the march was from Chawlseý to Aldermaston. The road taken is not quite clear. Walsingham, in his account of the march, which is obviously based on Gage's official account to Lord Digby, the Principal Secretary of State, with a few embellishments and additional details, speaks of Gage on his return crossing the Thames at Pangbourne *again*. But on the march to Basing the Thames must have been crossed at or a little above Wallingford. The actual route from Chawlseý to Pangbourne may have been along the valley of the Thames to Pangbourne, thence past Englefield, down into the valley of the Kennet. This would bring the force rather near the Parliamentary garrison at Reading. Clarendon says they went by lanes. Or the route from Chawlseý may have been past the Roman camp near Blewbury Downs, and thence by Compton, Hampstead Norris, and Frilsham—a remote bit of country even to-day. In any case, it is hard to understand how Gage can have crossed the Thames by Pangbourne more than once during his expedition. He sent on Walters to Aldermaston to see that food was ready for the force on its arrival there. Unfortunately Walters and his men fell in with some Parliamentary scouts. They forgot their orange tawny scarfs and ribbons, and attacked the Parliamentary soldiers. Some they killed and some they captured, but others escaped, and the besiegers at Basing were thus apprised of the plan.

Gage rested his men at Aldermaston, and then set out on the final march to Basing at eleven o'clock on Tuesday night. This was, perhaps, the most critical stage of the march to Basing. The way was no doubt through Pamber Forest—of forest not a great deal remains to-day, alas!—and by the Sherbornes. The distance was about twelve miles; the road not a very easy one. A delightful land it is for those who care for quiet scenes and remote hamlets; but soldiers, finishing a forty-mile march in a day and a quarter, and expecting a stern struggle at the end of it, are in no mood for such pleasures. The foot soldiers by now were so tired that some of the mounted men dismounted and gave up to them their horses, whilst in other cases the mounted men took up the foot behind them. Gage pushed on, heartening his men, and on Wednesday, true to his appointment, was before Basing at between four and five o'clock in the morning. He was met by a messenger, who told him that Ogle could not run the risk of sending a body of men from Winchester to help to raise the siege, the enemy being strongly posted between Basing and that

city.¹ This was a bitter disappointment, and Gage had hastily to recast his whole plan of attack. He determined to keep his force together, make a strong frontal attack, and strive to storm the position. The men were drawn up, wearing white tapes or handkerchiefs round their arms, by which they would be known to Paulet's force, and Gage rode up and down the ranks addressing them. Colonel Web—at one time a rival of Gage's, but now anxious to serve under him—led the right wing of the horse, Colonel Bunkley the left, Gage the foot. The force advanced, and found a body of five cornets of horse ready to receive them, whilst from some neighbouring hedges they were greeted by a volley of shot, which, however, did very little execution. Web charged the horse, and Bunkley followed with his wing. A two hours' fight between the foot soldiers took place, Gage leading himself, according to Walsingham, on foot. He drove the enemy from hedge to hedge till Cowdreys Down was gained, and then, completely victorious, entered the house.

There never could have been any hope of doing more, with such overwhelming odds in the number of men against him, than to raise the siege temporarily in order to replenish Paulet's supplies. Accordingly Gage speedily left the house and marched into Basingstoke. There he found and drove off a force of the enemy, and spent the rest of the day in sending food supplies into Basing. At night, the enemy beginning to recover spirit, Gage withdrew his men. On Thursday Colonel Bunkley again marched into Basingstoke, and throughout the day collected and sent food into Basing. In all, it was thought, two months' provisions were safe in Basing. To stay longer would now mean the loss of the Oxford force, and Gage, in the course of Thursday, laid his plans for returning at once. His scheme he kept absolutely to himself. He resolved to move that night under cover of dark, and sent out warrants to the towns of Sherfield and Sherborne peremptorily ordering the inhabitants to send corn to Basing House upon pain of a thousand horse and dragoons coming and firing their houses. This was a blind. Instead of waiting to see whether the warrants were obeyed, Gage prepared to return

¹ Ogle's faint-heartedness here and elsewhere brought him into contempt. At the annual buckfeast at Andover many years afterwards a song was sung, in which occurred the following passage:

'The first and Chief a Marquis is—
Long with the State did wrestle;
Had Ogle done as much as he
They'd spoyled Will Waller's Castle.

Ogle had wealth and title got,
So lay'd down his Commission;
The noble Marquis would not yield,
But scorn'd all base condition.

to Oxford. He recalled Bunkley just before dark, and quietly slipped away from Basing at about eleven on Thursday night. Scouts were sent out who, if necessary, were to pass themselves off as Parliamentarians marching to the Kennet to intercept the Oxford force on its march. Gage marched to the Kennet that night, and crossed it unobserved, by a ford near Burghfield Bridge: at Aldermaston and elsewhere along the river the enemy were posted, expecting him. The same day he reached the Thames and crossed it quite near Reading. He rested at Wallingford, and on Friday was back in Oxford.

Gage, in his official account of the affair, says that his losses were Captain Sturges and about twelve men of the rank-and-file, with forty or fifty wounded, though not dangerously. He also says that he captured 100 of the enemy, but he gives no figures concerning the number of the enemy killed and wounded.¹

Paulet, to the enduring shame of the Stuart cause, never received any fitting recognition of the loyalty that cost him so dear. Charles II. overlooked his services. Gage's genius for war and powers of command were recognised by the Lords of the Council. Upon Sir Arthur Ashton's retirement he was made Governor of Oxford, but was mortally wounded not long after at a small affair at Culham. There are surely few who will dispute Clarendon's view that 'the King sustained a wonderful loss in his death; he being a Man of great wisdom and temper; and one among the very few soldiers who made himself to be Universally lov'd and esteem'd.'

GEORGE A. B. DEWAR.

¹ Walsingham states that Gage's force slew 'six score' of the enemy and captured '150 armes.'

Patchwork.

It's foolish work tearing things to pieces to sew 'em together again.

MAGGIE TULLIVER.

MARTHA LUPTON had been considered 'wonderful house-proud' in those far-away days on which she now looked back with a mixture of pride and sorrow—the days in which she had had a house of her own and 'no need to be behowden to nobry.' The house, as a matter of fact, had been her husband's, but poor old Dicky Lupton had never been made 'mich count on.' He had been well bullied and kept in order; and Martha's neatness and cleanliness had made his life a sore burden to him. Even during his last illness the poor man had scarcely dared turn in bed for fear of rumpling sheet or pillow-case. Some of the neighbours had averred that as often as his poor feeble hand plucked at the counterpane when his end drew near, Martha, between her sobs, had possessed herself of it and carefully replaced it beneath the trimly-folded clothes.

But now Dicky was no more, and all that remained of him was a framed sampler worked by his hand in youth—he had evidently been born to be henpecked—and his hat, which hung in a prominent position opposite the door 'to freet'n tramps,' Martha said, though whether tramps generally think it worth their while to visit almshouses is a moot point. Yes, Martha now occupied one of the neat row of tiny almshouses situate near the school, and founded by the same generous benefactor more than two hundred years ago. A typical Lancashire man this must have been, open-handed, warm-hearted, but chary of words. The inscription over the school porch must surely have been characteristic: 'Doce, disce vel discede.'

Martha's present home was a narrow one, it was true, consisting of two rooms which she shared with another old woman called Moggy Gill; and in this enforced companionship lay what Martha felt to be the supreme hardship of her lot. She could put

up with living on charity, having worked so hard all her life ; now that she was no longer able to 'addle wage,' it was clearly somebody's duty to provide for her ; therefore she pocketed her seven shillings a week without scruple, and made the most of the poor little dwelling assigned to her. But not so much as to have it to herself!—that was the crux. To be moidered with a poor do-less creature same as Moggy—Moggy who could never be trusted to sweep clean or to dust the back of a chair as well as the front, or even to fill the kettle without spilling some of its contents on the freshly raddled floor. Moggy was enough to try the patience of a saint. She was a little blear-eyed old woman, a spinster. 'The men-folk knowed better nor to pick sich a poor missis as hoo'd ha' made,' Martha frequently asserted. She was rheumatic and, moreover, clumsy ; and though she and Martha had dwelt together for more than five years she had not yet begun to get into Martha's ways. Moggy had been first in possession, but the other at once took command ; she continued to be house-proud even in her two rooms, and not only delighted in scrubbing and cleaning and polishing, but insisted that Moggy should be equally energetic.

'Share and share alike,' she would say ; 'you scrub floor and I'll raddle it.'

So down poor old Moggy would go on her rheumatic knees, while Martha stood over her, frowning.

'I knowed ye'd never shift hearthrug,' she would cry if Moggy evinced any intention of shirking the two square feet of flags occupied by a piece of patchwork, fashioned by Martha's own hands.

'I—I wur just a-comin' to it,' she would falter, squatting back upon her heels.

'Nay, you was for leavin' it—I seed ye. Mind that corner now. Get clout well in-to't. Your fingers is all thumbs, seemin'ly.'

'Never content,' Moggy would groan, dropping on all fours again.

'Nay, I'm not like to be content when folks go scampin' their work that gate. You don't find no scampin' about my work. When I undertake a thing I stick to it. I undertook to make that there hearthrug, and neighbours is all agreed 'tis a pictur'.'

''Tis a pictur', too, Mrs. Lupton ; 'tis sure,' Moggy would agree obsequiously, hoping to give the conversation a more agreeable turn.

‘Well, then, don’t ye go a-makin’ little of it by layin’ of it on a dirty floor,’ Martha would return unflinchingly.

Her achievements in the way of patchwork caused much tribulation to her house-mate, though she was almost as proud of them as the maker herself. Not only were both beds covered with quilts deftly fashioned out of odds and ends, but each chair had a patchwork cover, and, moreover, cushions of the same; the tablecloth was ingeniously constructed in like manner, while the hearthrug, as has been already stated, was a miracle of its kind. Martha possessed wonderfully keen eyesight for her years, and it was her delight after her ‘readyin’ up’ had been accomplished to sit steadily at her sewing as long as daylight lasted. She was actually employed on the construction of a carpet, which was intended to cover the centre of the floor—a stupendous achievement to the accomplishment of which Moggy looked forward with dread; it was hard enough to avoid getting into trouble over the patchwork trophies already in existence. She was not allowed to tread upon the hearthrug, and was obliged to shake and brush her dress before sitting on a chair; woe to her, indeed, if she incautiously set down dish or cup on the table without first removing and carefully folding the cover! Sometimes she looked back with a sigh to past days when a certain good-natured old Irishwoman had shared her abode, and they two used to sit pleasantly idle during long hours chatting and gazing into the little street. But Martha would not tolerate idleness.

‘Ye can’t sew!’ she had exclaimed with incredulous scorn on one of the early days of their partnership, ‘but ye must knit, for sure?’

Then on Moggy’s feebly shaking her head, ‘Well, then, I’ll soon learn ye.’

And in spite of Moggy’s protests and many bungling mistakes, ‘learnt’ she was, and thenceforth while Martha stitched and the pattern of the carpet grew daily more complicated, Moggy sat by the window plying her needles and sighing.

In the autumn of a certain year one of the inhabitants of the next-door cottage died, and was replaced by a woman younger and more active than any to be found in the whole little row of whitewashed dwellings—a woman so active, indeed, that she supplemented her weekly pittance by going out regularly to work.

Mrs. Rimmer, her house-mate, came in one day to comment on the astonishing fact to her neighbours.

'I don't know as I like it so very well,' she remarked; 'tis awful lonesome for a body to sit all alone by theirsels all day. And when hoo come in o' neets, hoo's that tired I can scarce get a word out of her.'

'But ye have the place to yoursel' all day,' cried Martha and Moggy together; while the latter added with a stifled groan, 'an' that's summat.'

'Ah,' cried Martha viciously, 'tis summat for sure. Nobry to get in your road; nobry to go upsettin' your things. Look at that there kettle now. Some folks don't so much as know the difference betwixt straight and crooked. When that there kettle begins o' bilin' it's mich if the whole place isn't in a swim.'

'Tis wi' tryin' not to walk on hearthrug,' pleaded Moggy, looking at Mrs. Rimmer with renewed envy; *she* did not have to count her steps, and could put her kettle on her coals in any sort of way she fancied. It must be pleasant, Moggy thought, to be so free as that.

'Well,' said Mrs. Rimmer, poisoning her hands upon her hips and looking round dubiously, 'I dunno; I don't howd wi' bein' always forsook like. When Mary Makin goes out of a forenoon I assure ye I feel awful lonesome. Nobry to pass the time o' day or to offer a remark of any mak' fro' morn till neet—*'tis* lonesome as how 'tis—an' it don't seem fair, neither. I can't seem to think hoo does her share. Hoo gets her mate where hoo works, you know, an' I have my bit o' dinner all to mysel'! Now poor Mrs. Formby, as is gone to her long home, allus went shares—our appetites was mich the same, ye know, so we jest paid butcher share and share alike, but Mary, hoo won't pay butcher nought. Hoo says hoo gats mate enough o' weekdays, and hoo doesn't fancy it o' Sundays. I don't seem to have the heart to sit down to a bit o' beef by mysel'.

'I'd be willin' to change wi' you, I know,' cried Martha vehemently, 'eh dear, I would! I would that!'

Moggy said nothing, but continued to gaze speculatively at Mrs. Rimmer.

'I doubt if they'd let us change, though,' returned the latter with a laugh. 'The folks what puts us in 'ud be like to turn us out altogether if they thought we wasn't satisfied. Eh dear! 'Tis the A'mighty's will I s'pose—we must each bear we're own burdens. Well, good-day to ye, neighbours.'

'Good-day, Mrs. Rimmer. Ye'll jist mind that little mat yon by the door-hole; I don't mich fancy it's bein' stepped on.'

'Dear o' me, no to be sure, I reckon ye wouldn't. 'Tis a very handsome thing yon, 'tis for sure.'

And making a long step, Mrs. Rimmer crossed the precious little mat and withdrew to her own quarters.

'Poor Moggy,' she muttered to herself, 'I never did see a body so put upon. Eh dear! hoo can scarce so much as look reet; t'other's down on her for everything. Now, I could do wi' Moggy very well—very well, I could. Hoo's as nice and quiet a creetur' as ever I comed across—I never heerd her give an ill word to nobry. And I'm sure I can't for the life of me think what manner o' good there can be in all they little mats as nobry's allowed to touch.'

Meanwhile the couple next door had returned to their work in silence; Moggy, a little sore at heart at Martha's impatient words. She needn't have made little of her before strangers, she thought. Martha stitched away with angry jerks of her thread. Some folks didn't know when they were well off. There was Mrs. Rimmer reigning in peace and solitude, able to follow her own fancy from morning to night, while her betters were tied to them that was not much more than fools. 'My word! When folks can't so mich as put kettle on fire wi'out burnin' it all o' one side and havin' it spottin' all over clean floor'—here she darted a wrathful glance at poor clumsy Moggy—'how can anyone expect the place to be nice? There's not a bit o' good in my bein' house-proud,' she groaned to herself. 'If I was Mrs. Rimmer now—'

The idea gradually took firmer hold of her mind, till at last the desire to change with her neighbour grew so strong that she could scarcely eat or sleep. Her temper grew shorter than ever, and poor Moggy, becoming more nervous in consequence, blundered more frequently.

Matters came to a climax one day, when in the endeavour to avoid stepping on one of Martha's cherished mats she backed on to her own recently-filled bucket, and upset its contents all over the freshly raddled floor.

Martha's language on this occasion was not only unparliamentary but passed the bounds of even cottage propriety; such hard things, indeed, were those she said, and in such vigorous language, that Moggy sank into her own little chair in the corner and fairly sobbed behind her apron. The sound of her lamentations reached the ears of Mrs. Rimmer, who presently popped her head in at the door to inquire what was to-do.

'I can't thooal it. I can't thooal it!' wailed Moggy. 'I'd

sooner go to the Union. It couldn't be worse theer nor here. T' folks wouldn't be allus bargin' at a body.'

'Don't ye take on, Moggy,' the visitor was beginning sympathetically, when Mrs. Lupton broke in, with her face flaming.

'It's all very well to say "Don't take on." 'Tis enough to break a heart o' stone, it is. Jest you look at my clean floor! Hoo met be a child——'

'Well, the mischief isn't so bad when all's said and done,' pleaded the other good-naturedly. 'I'll soon fetch a cloth and help to sop it up. I wouldn't be so hard on the poor owd lass, Mrs. Lupton. Hoo's all of a shake, see.'

'I wish you had to live wi' her,' retorted the wrathful Martha. 'I doubt ye'd not be for pityin' her so mich then.'

'Eh, dear, I wish I did live wi' Mrs. Rimmer,' groaned Moggy. 'Hoo'd have a bit more pity—hoo'd wouldn't be ever and allus saucin' an' bargin'.'

'Eh, and I could do wi' you very well,' said Mrs. Rimmer, touched by the tearful words. 'We all have our faults, and I wouldn't be expectin' ye to have eyes at the back of your head, as how 'tis.'

'Ye may have your wish then,' cried Martha violently. 'Tis my wish too, I'm sure. Will ye stick to what ye've said, Mrs. Rimmer? Will ye swop houses wi' me? You're welcome to Moggy, and I'd be fain to live wi' Mary Makin—ay, that I would. I'd ax no better nor to have her out of the road all day.'

'Well,' said Mrs. Rimmer, a little taken aback, but laughing good-humouredly, 'I don't suppose they'd let us.'

'I'll go and ax leave mysel',' cried Martha eagerly. 'I'll go this very minute if ye'll say the word.'

'Do now, Mrs. Rimmer, love,' pleaded Moggy, looking up from behind her apron. 'You and me was allus very thick, and I'm sure I'd do my best to please ye. The two houses be jest same—ye should have your ch'ice o' everything.'

'Well, I don't mind if I do,' returned the other, still half in jest. 'I'll come and wipe up the floor, as how 'tis. But we's see.'

Before she had time to return with her cloth, Martha had donned bonnet and shawl, and already gone some paces down the street.

'Dear o' me, I didn't look for to be took up quite as quick as that cooms to,' said Mrs. Rimmer, looking after her with a dubious face.

'For mercy's sake don't call her back,' cried Moggy piteously.

'Eh, Mrs. Rimmer, if ye did but know! I'm not so very particular, the Lord knows, but hoo fair leads me the life of a dog.'

'I dunno how 'twill turn out, I'm sure,' said Mrs. Rimmer, still dubious. 'I didn't altogether mean—well, then——' with a change of tone as poor Moggy's face fell, 'if 'tis to be 'twill be, I reckon, and we must hope 'twill turn out for the best.'

Martha came back triumphant; the authorities, it seemed, had been amused at the request, and had unhesitatingly granted it. Dinner was no sooner over and the things 'sided' than she set about collecting her possessions and carrying them next door.

'I thought you'd give me that there quilt,' hinted Moggy, as she saw Martha not only remove and fold her own counterpane, but the companion one, which had for so many years adorned her little bed.

'You hadn't no reet to think no such thing, then,' retorted the other, with a superabundance of negatives which Moggy felt to be conclusive. 'I didn't mak' it for thee; I made it for the 'ouse.'

'Oh, I see,' responded Moggy faintly; and after that stood by, mutely scratching her elbows, while Martha proceeded to divest the chairs of their cushions, and remove the hearthrug and sacred doormat. The sampler was next added to the pile of portable property, and the late Mr. Lupton's hat laid on top.

'Now I reckon all's ready,' said Martha, looking anxiously round; 'nay, theer's the kettle-holder—hand over, Moggy.'

Moggy left off scratching her elbows and complied, looking more and more doleful; that kettle-holder had been the cause of many scoldings, for the condition of the lining had been a test of her polishing powers as regarded the kettle-handle, and as such had been daily subjected to severe inspection from Martha's keen eyes; but she was loath to let it go all the same.

'My word, the house do look wonderful bare,' cried Mrs. Rimmer, appearing just as these preparations were complete. 'I hadn't thought o' bringing aught fro' my place.'

'I doubt ye haven't got so very mich to bring away,' observed Martha pausing, with her chin resting on the crown of her husband's hat.

'Well, I dare say I could find a good few things if I was to look,' returned Mrs. Rimmer with a startled air. 'If Mrs. Lupton was going to be that havin', other folks had best look out for their reets,' she opined inwardly.

'I don't believe there's nought next door as doesn't belong to

the 'ouse,' asserted Martha firmly. 'You was never a great hand at your needle, Mrs. Rimmer.'

'The tay-pot's mine, though,' retorted the other excitedly, 'for I paid fipence ha'penny at Tyrer's mysel' for 't.'

'Ah, but you went and broke the t'other,' cried Martha triumphantly; 'and that was found on the premises. You're answerable for that there tay-pot, Mrs. Rimmer.'

'Goodness gracious, I never did see anybody so covetous!' exclaimed the last-named lady, raising her voice. 'Tay-pot as was broke wasn't worth tuppence—that it wasn't. Spout was chipped off when I coom, and knob gone fro' the lid. I met ha' got a cheap one, but this 'ere wi' the flowers on't took my fancy like—you can take the little brown one as is here if you've a mind.'

'That's mine!' said Moggy quickly; 'tis my own as I brought wi' me. I've a likin' for't, and I mun keep it.'

'Well, it stands to reason I mun ha' summat to drink out on,' said Mrs. Lupton, speaking as energetically as was compatible with the necessity of keeping her chin still poised on the top of the hat. 'I'm to be responsible for a tay-pot o' some mak', an' a tay-pot mun be found.'

'See you, Mrs. Lupton,' retorted Mrs. Rimmer, 'tis to please you as I agreed to mak' this change, and if you go for to take my tay-pot off me I'll jest go my ways back again. I'm not a-goin' to be put upon all roads.'

'There, take my tay-pot, Mrs. Lupton, do,' cried Moggy eagerly. 'It mak's beautiful tay, an' I'll reckon yo'll take good care on't. See, I'll take it over for ye—your hands is full.'

'Well, 'tis a poor shabby little thing, but happen I can do wi't,' assented Martha ungraciously; and with that she marched out followed by the two others.

'Dear, Mrs. Rimmer, wherever be you a-chivyin' me to?' inquired Martha, as the late proprietress of the little cottage pushed hastily past her in order to possess herself of sundry small objects which she feared the new-comer might at once annex. 'Yon cushion's fast to the chair; ye munnot carry that off.'

'Raly, I'd think shame of actin' so havin',' groaned the other, who had dropped upon her knees beside the chair in question and was busily engaged in untying the string. 'If 'tis fast to cheer, Mrs. Lupton, 'tis along o' my havin' teed it wi' my own hands. You've took off every single wan o' the cushions in your place. I mun ha' summat to sit on as well as yourself.'

Martha was silenced for the moment, but the dispute broke out afresh over a pair of bellows, and waged hotly when a certain warming-pan came in question; in fact, had not Mrs. Rimmer reiterated her intention of renouncing the new plan, Martha would never have withdrawn her claim. As it was, the belligerents parted with flushed faces and wrathful hearts, each firmly convinced that she had had the worst of the bargain.

As the doorways of each pair of houses were situated side by side under a single whitewashed porch, the position of Martha's new room was naturally the reverse of that which the old one occupied. When seated in her chair betwixt window and fire she looked down the street instead of up; and moreover the sun came into her eyes. She felt, as she subsequently expressed it, as if everything was left-handed like, and she was always putting the wrong foot foremost. Then her cushions did not seem to fit the chairs; her hearthrug would not lie smooth, for the tiles beneath were uneven; her doormat, she opined, 'would be like to fade wi' the sun lyin' on it that hot.'

She was still fidgeting about her new premises and grumbling to herself over the disgraceful way in which Mrs. Rimmer had tried to overreach her, when a heavy clogged foot was heard hammering over the cobble-stones, and in another moment a tall woman's figure halted on the threshold.

'Hullo!' cried Mary Makin in amazement. 'Whatever's to-do here? Wheer's Mrs. Rimmer?'

Martha hesitated; in the excitement of making the transfer both parties had momentarily forgotten the third partner in the transaction. Mrs. Lupton suddenly felt it would be a little awkward to explain matters, for the reason of the exchange had mainly been the fact of Mary's being 'out o' the road all day.'

'Hoo've gone next door, my dear,' she returned, however, with a brisk assumption of geniality. 'Ah, that's wheer hoo's gone to. Hoo've took a fancy for livin' wi' Moggy, d'ye see, and I reckoned I'd jest so soon bide here wi' you.'

'Ah,' returned Mary Makin indifferently, 'ye'll both be like to get into trouble, won't ye?'

'Dear, no, Miss Makin,' replied Martha with her most dignified air—'tis all agreed; I've been to ask promission.'

'Sombry met ha' axed mine, I doubt,' said Mary in rather an offended tone; 'but 'tis all same to me who lives here. I don't see mich on 'em.'

'No, to be sure,' agreed Martha, much relieved. 'Ye'll take off clog outside, wunnot ye?'

'I'll do nought o' the kind,' responded Miss Makin with spirit. 'I'm not a-goin' to be ordered about in my own house. I'll take 'em off same as I've always done.'

And with that—oh, horrible desecration!—she not only planted one large clog, decidedly in need of wiping, in the very centre of Martha's doormat, but proceeded to clump across the floor which Mrs. Lupton had just raddled, and to take up her position on the hearthrug itself.

'Here! Look out—mind wheer you'm goin', woman!' cried the indignant Martha, shocked out of all her previous caution. 'They things isn't meant to be trod on—ye met see that for yoursel' if ye had e'en in your head. I reckon ye've done for that hearthrug—an' jest look what a mess ye've made on clean floor. 'Tis easy seen you're not used to dacent ways.'

Mary contemptuously kicked the hearthrug out of the way. 'I don't think nought at all o' sich trumpery things,' she cried, 'all made o' tags and rags. Wheer's we're own hearthrug?'

'Mrs. Rimmer took it wi' her,' returned Martha, not ill-pleased to draw down the new-comer's wrath on that recreant one.

'I'll soon have it back, then, if that's all,' retorted Miss Makin; and out of the house she marched, every step leaving a muddy impression, and hammered vigorously on the neighbouring door.

Martha remained by her own fireside, groaning and shaking, not only with anger, but with a kind of fear—an entirely novel sensation. Never in all her life had she found anyone to 'stand up to her' before; and now, not only was Mary determined to stand up to her, but was evidently—so she owned to herself with a sinking heart—quite ready to trample on her, if need be.

After a moment's fierce altercation Miss Makin returned, triumphantly carrying a mat, of the kind common in cottages, which she proceeded to spread in front of the fire; then, catching up Martha's treasured handiwork, turned with it towards the door.

'Wheer are ye fur?' inquired Martha, with trembling tones.

'Folks next door mun ha' summat to set afore fire,' returned Mary laconically.

'Yon's mine!' shrieked Martha.

'Well, then, mak' up your mind and tak' your ch'ice,' returned Miss Makin resolutely. 'If ye leave it here I'll stand on't.'

Either alternative seemed dreadful, and while Martha was lamenting and hesitating, Mary, who was a person of prompt action, clumped out of the cottage and threw the precious object in at her neighbour's door, which she then slammed to.

'Now, let's hear no more on't,' she observed decidedly. 'You've comed to live in this 'ere house without a "by-your-leave" or "wi'-your-leave" to me. I'm not much a-whoam, but when I am I'll thank ye to keep a civil tongue i' your head, Mrs. Lupton. I work hard all day, and I'll have peace and comfort o' neets. So now ye know, an' mun act accordin'.'

Mary looked so big and masterful, as she stood there with her muddy feet firmly planted on the shabby rug, her expression was so fierce and her voice so loud, that, though several retorts rose to Martha's lips, she forebore to utter them, and sat down instead, suddenly and quite meekly.

Her new life had begun not very auspiciously, and her heart sank lower and lower as the days passed. Mary Makin was quite willing to accomplish a due share of work, provided she was allowed to set about it in her own way. For instance, she made no difficulty about drawing a bucket of water in the morning, but violently resented any hints about carrying it carefully and avoiding letting it 'swill over.' She would clean the grate, but in so noisy and careless a fashion that it was less trouble to Martha to undertake the job herself than to 'clean up' after her. The older woman, in fact, soon got into the way of doing everything herself, and Mary, whom she had perhaps hoped to shame by such a course, merely laughed and said, 'Please yo'rsel' an' you'll please me. I don't want to be bothered.'

Mary, in fact, 'wouldn't be talked to by nobody'; she came and went as she chose, and would just as soon see the house dirty as clean. It was this which Mrs. Lupton found most lacerating to her feelings. She wouldn't have minded the work so much, though it did seem a bit hard and unfair; but that Mary didn't appreciate the result of her labours—flesh and blood could scarce thooal that. She had mussed and crumpled her beautiful new coverlet till Martha, in high dudgeon, had removed it from her bed; she would have made the doormat a sight with mud and dirt if its owner had not prudently laid it by and replaced it with a piece of sacking, which was not only an eyesore, but a very inefficient protection to the floor. As for the way she rumbled the cushions, as Martha frequently lamented, 'Hoo was war' nor any mon!'

It was true that the discomfort caused by Mary's presence only endured for a few hours out of the twenty-four; but even in her absence the time did not seem to pass very pleasantly. What was the good of making the place clean when a body knew it would be all 'mucked about' at nightfall? As for going on with the carpet, could Martha ever hope to put it down in that house? Often, as she sat stitching by herself with her back to the window, for the light hurt her eyes, she would find her thoughts wandering to the hours she had spent in the company of Moggy, who was always so pleasant spoke. How she had admired the patchwork, to be sure! She had taken thought on't and been proud on't. A body might say a word to Moggy without putting her into a fury. Moggy didn't snore o' neets, neither.

'I doubt I were a bit too 'ard on her,' reflected Martha many a time.

One day Mrs. Rimmer looked in.

'I reckon you're 'appy now, Mrs. Lupton,' she remarked. 'Dear o' me, this is a nice little place, isn't it? I can never seem to settle so well next door. Well, ye've got it all your own way now, haven't ye?'

'Ah! I have,' agreed Martha, without enthusiasm. 'How's Moggy? I think hoo met ha' taken the trouble to look in. 'Tis very ill done o' her to keep away all this time, arter her an' me lived together sich a many year.'

'Eh! I reckon hoo thought you'd fancy her room more nor her company,' retorted the other, with a laugh. 'Hoo is but a poor owd dunderhead at best o' times.'

'Onybody's better nor nobry, I reckon.'

The words had no sooner leaped out of Martha's lips than she repented of them; indeed, she stopped short with such a startled face as might have proved to a keen-witted observer that the sentiment they expressed was a kind of revelation to herself; but Mrs. Rimmer was not given to these niceties of observation, and merely clapped her hands with a crow of laughter.

'Eh dear!' she exclaimed; 'that's summat new! I never thought to hear you say so.'

'Eh, I nobbut meant to say,' returned Martha, correcting herself with dignity, 't'ud nobbut be manners to coom and ax how I felt mysel', and how the change was agreein' wi' me.'

'Well, 't isn't for want o' thinkin' on ye, then,' returned the visitor. 'Tis fair moiderin' the way hoo goes on about ye—wonderin' this and wonderin' that. Hoo hasn't mich to say at

best o' times, but when hoo does oppen mouth hoo does nothin' but clack, clack about yoursel'. Hoo fair moiders me to death, whippin' up hearthrug if I so mich as set foot nigh 't. "Mrs. Lupton wouldn't like onybody to tread on 't," says hoo. "I think we ought to take the same care on 't as Mrs. Lupton would hersel'."

Martha's face relaxed. 'Hoo's a well-meanin' poor creatur', she observed condescendingly; 'very well meanin'. But hoo met ha' dropped in to see me as how 'tis.'

'I'll tell her,' said Mrs. Rimmer, adding, with a grin, 'How are ye gettin' on wi' Mary?'

'Well enough,' returned Mrs. Lupton shortly.

'Hoo's pratty stiff-necked, isn't hoo?' went on the other, with a chuckle. 'Ye'll noan find it so easy to sauce Mary as poor Moggy yon.'

Mrs. Lupton threaded her needle with great precision and made no reply; and Mrs. Rimmer backed away towards the door with a sarcastic smile.

'Seems to me yo don't find yoursel' changed for the better,' she remarked as she turned to cross the threshold, and was gone before Martha could respond.

Before the latter had had time to recover from her wrathful perturbation a hesitating tap came at the open door, and Moggy's stooped form insinuated itself round it.

'I heerd you was axin' for me,' she began, advancing timidly.

'Tis a wonder as ye let yoursel' be axed for,' interrupted Mrs. Lupton with spirit. 'You're a very great stranger, Moggy Gill.'

'I was afeerd o' gettin' into your road,' returned Moggy, so humbly that the other relented and smiled upon her quite affectionately.

'I'm fain to see ye as how 'tis,' she said pleasantly. 'You're lookin' very well.'

'Tis more nor I can say for you, Mrs. Lupton,' returned the visitor, who had been staring at her former companion with an expression of much concern. 'Eh, dear, you're sadly warsened. Eh, that you are, my dear! Whatever ha' you been doin' to yoursel'?''

'I dunno, I'm sure,' replied Martha, thoughtfully pricking her face with her needle, 'unless it's the hard work. Ye'd never think, Moggy, what work I have cleanin' up arter Mary. Hoo makes more dirt nor a mon, that hoo does,' cried Martha.

energetically. 'If our Dicky had made one-half the mess hoo does when he were wick I'd ha' taken besom to him.'

'I doubt you would,' agreed Moggy with conviction. 'Well, but doesn't hoo do her share o' readyin' up th' place?'

'I'd sooner do it mysel', replied Mrs. Lupton, lowering her voice. 'Hoo does it so ill to begin wi', and hoo's got sich a tongue—I'm fair frettened of her. I tell you, Moggy, I'd sooner meet a boggart any day, nor Mary in one of her tantrums.'

Moggy sat aghast, feeling as though the earth were crumbling beneath her feet. Mrs. Lupton afeard!

'Well, but ye'll be killin' yoursel' this gate,' she hazarded presently. 'I'd reckon I'd best look in to-morrow mornin' and gie you a bit of a hand, Mrs. Lupton, soon as ever Mary's out o' the road.'

'Nay, but you've got your own work to do,' said Martha hesitatingly; the longing look on her face, however, belied her words, and Moggy went on eagerly:

'I could come easy—I could that. Mrs. Rimmer does a good bit hersel', and hoo's not so very particular——'

'I'm sorry to hear that,' interrupted Mrs. Lupton severely, 'I'm sorry to hear Mrs. Rimmer isn't particular. I doubt the place is but ill-done to, now, sin' I left it. I doubt I shouldn't know it again.'

'Very like you wouldn't,' agreed Moggy shamefacedly.

'Well,' resumed Mrs. Lupton loftily, 't'ud happen be just so well if you *would* look in to-morrow, Moggy—I could put you in the way o' things again—I reckon you'll be forgettin' all as I learnt ye wi' so mich trouble.'

'Oh, no, I'll not forget, Mrs. Lupton,' returned Moggy with an ingratiating smile, 'I wouldn't be sich a ninny as to forget—but I'll coom as how 'tis. I could welly cry to see how wummicky you do look.'

Come she did on the following morning, and to work she set, with as much good will and as little discrimination as ever. To Martha's credit be it said that she was quite tolerant of her shortcomings, and beyond an occasional 'Well to be sure!' and 'Did a body ever see the like!' when Moggy made a particularly stupid mistake, did not reprimand her at all.

Indeed, at the end of Moggy's labours, she showed such real pleasure and gratitude at the results that the little old woman was quite overcome.

'Don't name it, Mrs. Lupton, my dear,' she cried, shaking

her warmly by the hand, 'tis a real pleasure—eh, that it is. I'd think nothin' at all o' poppin' in every day to do the same—and I will too. Now do let's set out doormat and tablecloth and all, same as in th' owd times. I can't abide to see th' place wi'out 'em.'

Martha needed very little pressing to comply with this request, and smiled benignly as Moggy's admiration broke forth.

'Eh, dear, but it do look pratty! Our place, yon, dunnot look the same wi'out 'em. I can scarce fancy it is same. I used to feel so proud lookin' about me of an arternoon, when I was sat at my knittin'.'

'Well then, if that's all,' returned Martha condescendingly, 'you'd be very welcome to come and set here at arter dinner, and bring your knittin' wi' you.'

'I will,' agreed Moggy joyfully; 'dear, 'tis quite a while since I did any knittin'! Mrs. Rimmer, hoo don't seem to take to the needlework mich. Well, I'll coom.'

After dinner she reappeared accordingly, and for many subsequent days this mode of procedure continued. Mrs. Rimmer made no objection at first; but as day after day Moggy 'popped next door to lend a hand to poor Mrs. Lupton,' or 'jest nipped in' for an hour or two with her knitting, she grew first sarcastic, and then indignant.

'I tell ye what it is,' she cried, bursting in upon the pair one afternoon as they sat contentedly opposite each other, busy each with her own piece of work. 'I tell ye what 'tis, ye'd ha' showed a deal more sense if ye hadn't axed me to change houses at all.'

Martha looked up from her sewing in dignified surprise.

'Eh, dear, Mrs. Rimmer, you give me quite a turn!' she exclaimed.

'Turn!' echoed Mrs. Rimmer, folding her arms at her waist and inflating her nostrils. 'Talk o' turns! Ye'd best turn out o' this and let me turn in again, I reckon.'

Martha dropped her patchwork and gasped; Moggy looked up mildly.

'What is it as has vexed ye?' she inquired.

'Vexed!' retorted Mrs. Rimmer. 'Well, I'm not to say vexed, but I'm a deal surprised—a deal I am. You, as couldn't put up wi' each other when you was together, now ye must be for ever callin' out for each other! I'm sure Mrs. Lupton sees a deal more o' you, Moggy, nor I do.'

'Did ye want me, then?' inquired Moggy, rising with as much alacrity as the stiffness of her joints would allow.

'Nay,' returned Mrs. Rimmer, in a somewhat mollified tone, 'I don't want ye—not particular I don't; I only say there's no sense in't. If you howd so much to one another's company, why did ye give over livin' together? Why don't ye live together now?' she added with increasing vehemence. 'Why don't ye change back, Mrs. Lupton?'

Martha and Moggy looked at each other, the same eager query in the eyes of both. Mrs. Rimmer intercepted the glance, and, being in the main a good-natured woman, burst out laughing.

'Well, to be sure!' she cried as soon as she could speak. 'Eh, dear! Well I never! Well, fetch back your things, Mrs. Lupton, and I'll fetch back mine.'

'Are ye sure ye don't mind?' inquired Moggy politely.

'Mind? Why, not a bit, lass. I allus liked this house best, and I reckon I'll see jest as mich o' you as I do now. *You'll* be more like to mind arter a bit,' she added feelingly.

'I can mak' mysel' very well content wi' Mrs. Lupton,' asserted Moggy stoutly; 'very well I can—her an' me was al'ays thick, and I—I don't know the reason on't, but I don't seem able to get into onybody else's ways.'

As Mrs. Rimmer vanished, still laughing, Martha turned quickly to her old crony.

'Eh, thank ye for that word, Moggy. If you can content yoursel' wi' me I can do wi' you. Eh, that I can. I don't ax for no better company. I've missed ye awful.'

M. E. FRANCIS.

A Fool's Wisdom.

I

HE loved to watch the swallows skim
 Low down across the reedy pool,
 While brown birds sang their evening hymn,
 The man who was three-parts a fool.

II

He loved to hear the summer sea
 With smiling treachery kiss the shore ;
 Or, on a lonely rock and free,
 To face the wild waves' bestial roar.

III

Red gold he worshipped with the best
 Of striving, greedy sons of men ;
 Skyward the fields lay, in the west,
 In which he sought and found his gain.

IV

He loved the scent of autumn trees,
 The soft, sad sound of winter snow,
 The whispering of the summer breeze,
 And the spring's footfall sweet and slow.

V

Life was to him a varying dream,
 A pageant strange, now grim, now fair ;
 The very city's self did seem
 The casket of some jewel rare.

VI

And so he dreamed the years away
 Until he left the lower school,
 Learning his lessons in his play,
 The man who was three-parts a fool.

E. P. LARKEN.

The Phoenix Fishing Club.

IT was Sunday afternoon—the second Sunday in July. At eight o'clock in the morning the heat had been phenomenal, at three in the afternoon it was almost unendurable. At no time could the atmosphere of Porcupine Yard be considered good, but Sunday afternoons always found it at its worst. For then the inhabitants of the eighteen tumble-down houses which made up the yard seemed to prefer 'greens' to any other vegetable for dinner, and as everyone strained the cabbage-water into the open gutter which conveyed the refuse of the houses between the cobble-stones in the middle of the yard, the odour which arose, more especially when mingled with baking pig's fry and grilling bloaters, need hardly be described to be realised.

Sunday dinner was over, and the doorsteps were occupied by men and women, fathers and mothers of the various families who were enjoying a regatta on a small scale by racing empty match-boxes down the flowing stream of unsavoury water. Lodgers, big brothers, and friends, who had come in from a neighbouring yard to smoke a pipe, congregated round the doors or squatted on the steps. Most of the men disregarded coats and waistcoats, some had relieved themselves of their braces, and even the women went about with their dress tops undone. There was a buzz of conversation, broken by shrill cries of 'Arry, don't darb yarself up.' 'Leave off asplashen' th' water on yar sister.' 'Hannie, yer ain't ter take yer shoon off,' as the different mothers reproved their offspring. The side-door of the Porcupine, which opened into the archway forming the only entrance to the yard, was constantly swinging to and fro as men and women entered or came out after trying to quench the thirst of a Sunday dinner.

All the occupants of the houses in Porcupine Yard were clickers by trade, all worked at one or other of the many boot factories in Norwich. Some were only eyelet-hole makers, others were sole-peggers, or tongue-sewers, or solers and heelers, but all

were interested in the various stages through which a boot or shoe has to pass.

Several of the men were tightly strapping up what looked like bundles of sticks, but which were really the sections of long bream fishing-rods; others were running new gut lines through their lips to take out the curl; some were comparing floats, or winding lines on reels, for the members of the Phoenix Fishing Club, to which most of the men in Porcupine Yard belonged, held their meetings and contests every second Monday of the season on one of the rivers of Norfolk Broadland.

On the doorstep of a house at the farther end of the yard a young man with black, curly hair, was seated. His shirt sleeves were rolled up, but, in contrast to those worn by the other denizens of the court, it was evident that the shirt was clean that day. The pipe which he balanced between his teeth was unlit, and he sat with elbows on his knees, supporting his head in his hands. His eyes rested on the ground and his whole appearance was one of deep dejection.

He was joined by a man with reddish hair and whiskers.

'Hullo, Curly,' exclaimed the new-comer. 'Hain't yer got yar tow out yet; ain't yer going ter see yar poles be all right? What's up? Yer look like a herren' what ha' shot his roe, kinder flabby-like. I know that ha' been a tryin' day,' went on the speaker sympathetically, 'but that'll be a lot different ter this 'ere yard when we gets out in th' Hornen' willage reach 'bout tree o'clock ter-morrow mornen'. That'll fresh yer up a trifle, old mate, won't it?'

'Ain't agoen' ter no Hornen' willage,' came the reply in a very melancholy voice. 'No, I ain't agoen' along o' th' club this time. Don't know as how I ain't going ter give over fishen' altergether, and that's straight, Ginger, now yer knows.'

'What!' exclaimed Ginger. 'Whatever are yer talken' about? Ha' yer got a fit o' bile? You, you, Curly, going ter give over fishen', and next month yer'll be woted scratchertery ter th' Club? You as ha' won more prizes nor any on us; th' masterhand of all on us give over fishen'—well, I'm blowed! Strike me blue and purple in streaks!' The man sat down beside Curly and smacked him on the back. 'Why, dang me, yer bain't gone natural or broke, be yer?'

'No, I bain't,' replied Curly, 'but I means what I says. I ain't agoing ter Hornen' ter-night, so there 'tis. Hornen', of all places! I hates it. I 'ont say as next meeten' on th' Beccles

river I mayn't come, I shall see how I feels; but I sha'n't fish for prizes no more. I feels if ever I did a bit o' fishen' I should like ter row up some lonely bit o' th' river, or round some corner where there worn't no one ter talk tew, and if th' plaguey fish wouldn't bite chuck myself in. That's how I feels, Ginger. I know I should chuck myself in if I went ter Hornen' ter-morrow.'

'Ha' this 'ere feelen' comed on since th' last meeten' we had in th' church reach at Hornen' last month? Ha' that comed on eos yer lost th' prize ter Pringle by one ounce? Dang me, Curly, we can't all ha' prizes; look at me, I hain't won narthen' t' year.'

'Dang Pringle and his ounce,' hissed Curly. 'Devil take his ounce! He's welcome ter th' prizes, all he can get. No, 'tain't Pringle—leastways not altergether,' he added hesitating. 'Tis th' place I can't abide.'

'Why, I thoughts as how yer liked Hornen'. I call that a proper little willage; old Ford he sell a fairish drop o' beer, and the fishen' be moderate gude. Besides, I thoughts as how yer wor arter a bit o' skirt down there, proper looken' mawther, gal with hair all over her face, looks like a wisp o' hay. Milly Hewitt, worn't that her name? Thought yer wor going all plain sailen' in that quarter.'

'Wor, till she took up along o' Pringle,' Curly groaned.

'What! Ha' she give yer th' dirty kick out, old partner?' Ginger inquired.

'Well! not exactly that, neither,' answered Curly. 'Cos I can't say as how I ever properly fixed it up along o' she. Still, she knowed I'd gone clean soft over her, so she had over me tew. Why, she once told me whenever she seed me she had a kind o' funny feelen' all down th' back. What conclusion can yer come tew arter a remark like that 'ere?'

'On't she speak ter yer now?' asked Ginger, much interested in this recital of woman's fickleness.

'Oh! she'll speak ter me right enow, but that's what I complain on. She kinder fust come ter my worm and then go ter his bit o' paste. I ain't going ter be sarved like that, 'tain't likely. If she like going along o' Pringle she ain't comen' along o' me, and I meant ter tell her that th' last time I went over. I went over for th' purpose tew. Only when I seed her I couldn't say it nohows, all I did wor ter make a fule o' myself and tell her how I loves her, and all she does wor ter start alarfen' enow ter bust her stay-laces. She say, "Lor, bor, lots on 'em dew that; tell us

somethin' new." Then a chap I knows, as lives 'gen Colman's factory, tells me he seed her out in a boat along o' Pringle last Saturday arternoon, and I say ter myself, "Chuck it up; go and hang yarself or drown yarself," and I feels like dewing on it tew.'

'Oh! yer've got it bad,' said the sympathetic Ginger. 'Shocken' bad, I can see. I know what 't be—I've been married tree times, mate, so I've been through with it. That's wus nor th' toothache. Silly fules gals be. Why, yer'd make th' gal a gude husband, a bloke in yar position and all.'

'That's where it cut cruel agen', said Curley, in a most aggrieved tone. 'Tain't as if I wor only an ordinary clicker in th' trade, now I ha' been made foreman in th' Army Bute department at Bonsors'. Thirty-five shillen' a week and overtime ain't ter be sneezed at,' and he drew himself up with pride. 'Nother thing, I'm dead sick o' this 'ere stinken' yard and a-lodgen' with common folk like th' Besseys. I ha' got a tidy bit in a builden' society, and I could get one o' them little new housen' by th' station, and wery sune pay it off and ha' it for my wery own.'

Suddenly a figure bounded out of the central house, jumped the steps, and struck an attitude in the middle of the yard. There was a general shout of, 'What yer, Grinders! Gude on yer. Yer looks wholly proper. Got yar Constant Screamer?'

The individual addressed as Grinders had a false nose and bald head, and was made up to represent Ally Sloper. He wore knee-breeches and a cut-away tail coat, and in his hand was an enormous white top hat, much battered in the crown. On his back was chalked in large letters, 'This side up with care.'

'What, at it agen?' he exclaimed, when the laughter and cheers his appearance had excited ceased. 'Hat it agen!' he repeated, as he put the white hat on his head to give point to his remark. Blowing a shrill whistle between his teeth, he shouted, 'Now we sha'n't be sune,' and careered round the yard, catching hold of the women, and trying to embrace each in turn, receiving many blows on the nose for his impertinence. Then seizing a fat, elderly woman by the waist, he danced her nearly off her feet till he arrived at the Porcupine side-door, and with a 'Come on, Sairey, my own, let's ha' a pint,' disappeared with her into the public-house.

'Oh, come on, Curly, don't be a fule—yer must come along o' us,' said Ginger. 'Grinders is all out ter-day, I can see. He'll keep yer lively, yer ha' only got a fit o' th' blues. Grinders 'll play us a toon on th' road, and we ha' got Taylor's big brake—

hold twenty-six on us—and tree horses, good 'uns ter go. Yer ha' got ter come; dang th' gal, don't be done by a chap like Pringle.'

'I shall be a damper on yer all,' said Curly, relenting somewhat.

'Not yer, mate, yer acomen' I tells yer; out o' th' way, I'm agoing inside ter get yar fishen' tow and poles.'

Saying this Ginger entered the house, and Curly rose from the doorstep, brushed the dust from the seat of his trousers, and followed his friend indoors.

The three horses drew the large brake containing the members of the Phoenix Fishing Club at a smart pace through the deserted streets of Norwich, and leaving the straggling town behind, reached the high road and were soon out in the open country. The big lamps twinkled and flashed as, like balls of fire, they shone on the clouds of dust raised by the horses, who sped merrily on their way. Grinders had taken on himself the office of conductor, and stood on the step, with one hand holding on to the handle of the door, with the other beating time, as the whole party joined in the chorus of a song, of which he sang the words, waking up the sleepy little villages through which they passed, making night hideous with vulgar merriment, causing dogs to bark, and an occasional blind to be drawn aside in a cottage where someone lay wakeful on his bed.

It was but little after two o'clock when the brake passed through Rackheath. The full moon shone brightly on the bracken, turning it to a silver grey, the dark fir trees swayed in the gentle breeze, and a rabbit dashed across the road, disturbed from its nocturnal repast by the unaccustomed noise.

On went the brake over Wroxham Bridge and past Hoveton Church, the drag on the wheel screeching as the horses trotted down the steep incline to the level road which skirts the Broad, whose waters flickered in the moonlight. Clouds of black-headed gulls, awakened by the noise of the brake as it rattled over the wooden bridge that spans Hoveton Run, flew screaming round and round the Broad. Here the road has a dyke on either side, and banks of meadowsweet gave forth a strong perfume, to mingle with the odours of mint and other marsh herbs. From the top of the hill that had yet to be climbed a good view could be obtained of the winding river; then the driver made a sharp turn to the right and down a steep descent brought the cheerful party into Horning village. As the steaming horses pulled up in the

Swan Inn yard, Grinders waved his hat and called for three cheers for the Phoenix, and so hearty was the response that he must have been a sound sleeper who was not awakened by the shouts. In the cottage opposite the Swan a blind drew up, the window was softly opened, a girl's curly head was cautiously thrust forward, and a pair of bright eyes watched the fishing club descend from the brake.

'Yes,' said the girl to herself as she made out the figure for which she was looking. 'Curly ha' come—I knowed he would. I can't help atormenten' on him; he look proper when I rile him. Pringle, tew, he ain't half bad either, but I thinks I like Curly th' best. That be wunnerful hard for a gal like me ter know her own heart for sarten, but I'm sure that there Curly is th' chap for me.'

The fishing club had entered the yard, and, as its members were hidden from view, Milly Hewitt closed her window and returned to her bed.

The sun rose, suffusing the east with a delicate pink light, whose warmth spread over the miles of green marshes, colouring the tips of the waving reed, and gilding the gables and chimneys of the double line of cottages which form the village street, causing them to throw faint blue shadows across the little quay, against whose wooden piles the river, stirred by the fresh morning breeze, sucked and flapped. In the distance a wherry, which had been sailing all night, also caught the breeze, and her huge sail bellied out as if the beginning of another day had brought fresh life into the old craft's timbers.

In the delicate haze that hung over the river some fourteen boats, all moored to stakes, stretched in a long line the whole length of the village. In every boat was a man, in some boats two men, every one with a long rod in his hand, intent on fishing. As one looked down the line of boats one saw a constant waving of rods as one man and then another drew his line in or threw it out. A silence had come over the noisy crew who had sung themselves hoarse on the trip from Norwich. Even Grinders, sitting in his war paint and Ally Sloperian costume, was silent, with eyes fixed closely on his float. Sometimes when he saw a friend hook an unusually large fish he would call out, 'What, at it agen?' or a similar time-worn joke, but he, as every other member of the party, was too absorbed in his engrossing occupation to have much time for disturbing levity.

Towards half-past seven a little blue boat glided out from a dyke, hidden by overhanging willows, and a young girl, whose fair

hair was blown back by the gentle breeze, pulled slowly towards the fishing club. When she reached the first boat she raised her oars from the water and leant forward to talk to the fisherman. Some twenty yards off the occupant of the next boat, who was also without a companion, noticed that a seemingly earnest conversation was going on between the man and the girl.

'Course she must single out Pringle ter stop and talk tew,' muttered Curly, angrily biting his lip. 'She 'on't fare ter notice me, I'll be bound. If she dew I 'on't ha' no say with her, I'll back my life o' that. Who'd ha' thought a gal like that 'ud ha' took up with th' class o' chap like Pringle? Dang gals! I ha' wholly done with 'em and so I'll show her, tew, if she happen ter come this way.'

Notwithstanding his pretended indifference Curly could not keep his eyes off the couple, and he noticed how the sun shed its rays on the golden head of hair, and he watched as the wind caught the loose locks and blew them first one way and then another. Presently with a little laugh the girl dipped her oars in the water and rowed her boat in his direction.

'Gude mornen', Curly,' she exclaimed, backwatering so as to bring her boat up close to his. 'Be yer haven' gude sport?' she asked in a cheery voice.

'No,' came the answer.

'It's a wery nice mornen' for fishen'.'

'Tew bright,' was the short rejoinder.

'P'raps I be disturbing on yer?'

'Dare say yer are,' was the reply.

'Shall I be agoin'?'

'That's as yer thinks proper,' muttered Curly.

'Well, yer ain't wunnerful civil this mornen', Curly,' laughed Milly, tossing back her curls.

'Better go back where yer comes from, then. Daresay Pringle be wunnerful civil.'

'Well, he be a deal more nor yer be,' said the girl with another toss of her head. 'S'pose I can stay where I like?'

'Yes; th' river be th' public highway,' quietly remarked Curly.

'Thank yer for yar information. Wonder they don't call yer Surly instead o' Curly. Be yer agoin' ter beat Pringle?' Milly inquired. 'He ha' got a right gude swim.'

'Don't know, don't care. Don't care about narthen', said the man with a sigh.

'Oh! How long ha' yer been feelin' like that, Curly?'

'Thought yer knew.'

'No; I don't.'

'Then, if yer ha' a mind ter know, yer shall. Ever since yer took up along o' Pringle and gived me th' cold shoulder. There! now yer knows, straight.'

'I never ha' gived yer th' cold shoulder as I knows on, Curly. Yer a duzzy fule ter think so,' said the innocent Milly. 'I be quite beat out about yer tew chaps,' she added. 'Yer both so nice, I can't make up my mind which I likes best. Now, yer can't be waxed cos I tells th' truth, can yer?'

Curly did not answer, but, bringing in his line, carefully rebaited his hook.

'What's th' prize ter-day?' Milly asked, watching the operation.

'A nice doormat, a lady's umbreller, and a cowcumber added,' answered Curly, as, with a somewhat vicious jerk, he flung back his line into the water.

'That be a useful prize, 'specially th' lady's umbreller. Be that a silver-mounted one?'

'Yes.'

'Should like a silver-mounted umbreller,' the girl said, half aloud. 'S'pose it lay between yer and Pringle?'

'It generally dew,' said the still sullen Curly. 'We got th' best bit o' water when we drawed for places t' mornen.'

'Dew yer know what I ha' made up my mind ter dew?' slyly inquired Milly.

'No, I don't. Didn't know yer could make up yar mind 'bout anything or anybody for tew minutes tergether,' Curly answered with a bitter little laugh.

'Oh, well, I ha' this time, Mr. Clarver. I ha' made up my mind that which o' yer tew chaps gets th' prize ter-day I be going ter take for better or wus. So if yer wins yer'll ha' me along o' th' doormat, and if Pringle wins he'll ha' th' same. I gets th' silver-mounted 'breller either way.'

'Milly,' said Curly, turning round and looking the girl full in the face, 'yer don't mean that for gorspel truth, dew yer?'

'That I dew. Be yer on?'

'No!' thundered Curly, 'that I ain't. Danged if I'll fish for yer, so there.'

'Oh! wery well then. No matters, Pringle wins without any trouble. Gude mornen', Curly.' Milly gave a vigorous pull with

the oars, and the boat sped on. 'Shall I go and tell Pringle he ha' won already?' she shouted.

There was a silence for a moment, then Curly answered: 'No, I'll be danged if yer shall!'

'Wery well, Curly dear, dew yer try and win th' prize.' Milly swiftly rowed up the dyke, out of sight and hearing.

By twelve o'clock the almost vertical sun beat fiercely on the backs of the ardent fishermen. The fishing, which had been fairly good in the early hours, now became most monotonous, and neither juicy gentle, wriggling worm, nor bright-coloured paste could tempt a fish all down the line of boats. Most of the men had let their floats swim to the end of the line and their rods rest against the sides of the boat, and had curled themselves up under large umbrellas to sleep away the hours till the cool evening breeze brought the fish on the feed again. Some were eating bread and cheese, and drinking from mugs the contents of large stone jars; a few, among whom were Pringle and Curly, still persistently tried to entice the fish to be caught; but after a time even they gave up the attempt as hopeless, and, laying themselves at full length in their boats, joined in the universal slumber. Grinders, indeed, had tried to keep the party awake by yelling at the top of his voice, to a concertina accompaniment, a song whose refrain told about, 'Oh, dem golden kippers! Oh, dem golden kippers! Don't they hum and haw, ta-ra-ra! Don't they——' but at last even he was overcome by the heat and the beer he had imbibed, and soon there was not a member of the club but was wrapped in sleep.

Then the boat with Milly Hewitt in it again crept out of the dyke. So carefully did she row that her oars hardly made a sound, and she gently drifted up to the boat where Curly was sleeping. Pulling up the bag-net which was dragging from the side of her boat, she plunged in her hand and brought out a large, live bream, which she slipped into the net hanging in the water, wherein Curly's catch was being kept alive. She took out a second, and then a third, and giving a look at the sleeping Curly, let herself drift past on the stream.

'Poor old Curly, I ha' tormented on yer, hain't I? I 'on't dew it no more arter this, though. I reckon them tree fish'll pull yer through. They weighs tree pounds each, I know.' Milly blew a kiss towards Curly's boat and then disappeared up the dyke.

At eight o'clock the man who acted as umpire fired an old musket and roared out, 'All poles up.' At the sound of the gun

every fishing-rod was held in the air, and a general taking to pieces began. Then the umpire rowed down the line of boats, stopping at each one to receive the net containing the catch, round the mouth of which he tied a tape with a number attached. After this mooring-stakes were hauled up and boat after boat drew up to the quay, the occupants crowding round the door of the Swan to witness the weighing which was taking place inside.

Presently there was a shout, 'Curly ha' won by nine pounds. Lor! them be tree sockers, them tree bream!' Curly stepped forward and looked at his catch in astonishment.

'Well! I'll be blowed!' he muttered, and he walked away and stood and looked into the river. 'That fairly beat me; I knowed I caught a gude fish or tew, but they must ha' growed in th' net, I never seed such clinkers. I be fairly coped, I be.' An arm stole through his and a voice whispered in his ear:

'Curly, here be yar prize,' and the girl kissed him on the cheek.

'What, at it agen?' came a voice from the distant crowd, which made everyone turn and stare at the couple. 'Hat it agen!' A roar of laughter greeted this sally and encouraged the speaker to further witticisms. 'Good on yer, Curly, try another one; ain't she a disy!'

'Don't go back by the brake, Curly,' Milly pleaded. 'There be a train at half arter ten from Wroxham; go by that, and I'll walk along o' yer part o' th' way. I ha' got something ter tell yer. I wants ter tell yer how sorry I be I tormented on yer, but I'll be wholly different arter this. Meet me by Rope's Hill in half an hour,' and the girl let go his arm and ran away.

'I only pretended ter take up along o' Pringle just ter see if I could find out if yer wor really in earnest,' said Milly, as with her lover's arm round her waist she walked along the Wroxham road. 'When I seed how wholly miserable yer wor this mornen' I knowed that wor all right. I only thought about putten myself up for a prize just for a spree. My brother got them fish out o' Cockshute Broad yesterday; he left 'em in his net in our deek. Guess he'll be pretty riled when he finds 'em gone. I thought that 'ud be a fair take-in for Pringle, tew; he got ter think tew much o' hisself, he did. That ha' upset him summut, I know.'

'Yes, but what about the real prizes?' said Curly, between the kisses he kept imprinting on her cheeks. 'What about th' door-mat, and th' silver-mounted umbreller, and th' cowcumber? He really won right enow.'

'Why let's send 'em ter him with our wery best compliments,' answered Milly. 'And dew yer tell him from me th' 'breller 'll dew for th' gal he walks out with as lives up Tombland.'

'Ha' he got one?'

'Yes, he ha' walked out with her for six months; he be a gay spark, he be. I'm right glad I ha' sarved him out.'

'I thought as how yer wanted a silver-mounted umbreller?'

'Well, I don't want one now. Though that be nice and dark, that be all sunshine ter us. Leastway that bain't a-raining, be it, Curly?'

'No,' replied Curly, 'and against th' time it dew, I'll give yer one, a proper one with a real silver handle. And what's more, I'll give yer a real golden ring for yar finger.'

CHAS. FIELDING MARSH.

*Prince Karl.*¹

By H. C. BAILEY.

CHAPTER XX.

THE STORY OF DUKE BERNHARD.

ALL these things were done while Karl of Erbach and Jock Elliott were on their way to Duke Bernhard. But Père Joseph's galloping couriers started later and yet outran them easily, so that when the two men rode into Bernhard's camp on the fourth day after they left Solgau they found a smaller army, for the Lichtensteiners had been sent back to Lichtenstein. Bernhard, watching their slovenly, ill-ordered march, turned to one of his colonels.

'Zwicka, Zwicka, what faith we keep with the rat in Lichtenstein!'

'Better than he deserves, Duke Bernhard,' growled the Colonel.

'Ah, my Zwicka, I would rather fight against those men than with them; and so I will be honest before God and man,' said Duke Bernhard, and he lay back in his saddle and laughed. 'Gott! they march like drunken crabs,' he cried, watching the dark Lichtenstein colours zigzag across the plain. 'What would you say to your men, Zwicka, if they served you like that?'

'Say, sir?' spluttered Zwicka. 'Beelzebub's fiends, sir! my men, sir? I should say, you——'

'Hush, hush, my Zwicka; consider our purity,' said Duke Bernhard, and he chuckled; but Zwicka under his breath was elaborating some comprehensive phrases. Bernhard turned away and rode through his camp, dropping rough jokes among the men as he passed, but never missing anything that ought to be seen. He was almost up to the outposts when he saw the two

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big men trotting quickly towards the camp. They were challenged by a sentry and stopped. Duke Bernhard cantered forward.

‘What? Karl?’ he cried. ‘Let them pass, man.’

‘They don’t know the word, please your Highness,’ said the man.

‘Damn the word; nor do I,’ cried Bernhard—‘let them pass!’ But the sentry without dropping his musket said stolidly:

‘The word is Weimar, sir. Now you can give it me.’ And Bernhard chuckled.

‘Gott! I am less than my word. Eh, Karl, but how is this? What have you done with your men?’

‘Sent them to hold Schwartzsee,’ said Karl. Then all trace of his laugh faded from Bernhard’s face.

‘Schwartzsee?’ he said, tugging his moustache. ‘Castle? Ay, ay, our first point,’ and he looked at Karl, nodding approval. ‘But—eh! what!’ He caught Karl’s cloak, pulled it aside, and saw the boy. ‘Oh, Karl, Karl, and you never told us!’ and he chuckled. ‘Well, well, it’s a sad world: never have thought it of you, Karl. And did you make a fool of her or did she make a fool of you?’

‘I found the child,’ said Karl shortly.

‘Yes; one always does,’ said Bernhard. ‘They bring ’em to you, and you say bo! and it cries, and she laughs and cries too—and Gott! for all the plague I believe you like her the better!’

‘He is not mine,’ said Karl gravely: this was very little to his taste.

‘Oh, she made a fool of you!’ cried Bernhard. ‘Well, he hasn’t much of your mastiff jowl. What have you done with her?’

Karl changing to French that the child should not understand, said:

‘Buried her.’

‘What?’ cried Bernhard. ‘You, Karl?’

‘I found the child in a cottage on the Solgau border. His mother had been murdered by Pappenheimers——’ Bernhard who had grown serious suddenly, cried:

‘Ah, Ludwig’s Pappenheimers!’

‘What, you knew?’ cried Karl. ‘I only found it out then. One of them had the Lichtenstein colours. How did you know?’

‘I guessed,’ said Bernhard. ‘What a fool the man is!’

'He does harm enough,' Karl said grimly.

'That is why,' said Duke Bernhard; and seeing Karl stare at him he laid his hand on Karl's shoulder: 'That is why,' he repeated; 'and you have more to hear, Karl. I suppose you have come straight from Solgau; is there news?'

'You knew Max was murdered?' said Karl.

'Yes, I thought I had news, Karl,' said Duke Bernhard. 'Come to my tent.'

At the door as they dismounted the child looked up in Karl's face.

'Please, shall I have supper, sir?' and Bernhard cried over his shoulder:

'Oh, bring him in, Karl!' and he called for a meal.

The tent was bare enough; a thick dark mat lay on the ground, there was one bare table, one littered with papers, and a few rough wooden chairs were standing near them. Bernhard strode across to the papers.

'So he really is not yours, after all,' he said, looking over them with his back to Karl. The child stood holding Karl's hand, looking timidly around him. 'Quite sad, Karl. It would have been such a relief to pick a hole in you. I suppose I shall have a joke against you some day.' A servant came in with a tray. 'There—fall to, Karl; and let the child colour his cheeks. I doubt you don't understand children, Karl. No experience, eh? God help them, they'll have a hard time of it.' He turned with a paper in his hand. 'Such a father to live up to—and,' he paused and went on more slowly, 'such a name to bear. I am not always jesting, Karl.'

'You said you had news.'

'Eh? Yes. Oh, the child isn't eating. Come here, Humpty-Dumpty,' he drew a chair up to the table and took the child on his knee. Over the child's head he held out a paper to Karl. 'There's some of it: quite interesting. Now, Hop o' my Thumb, will you have some of the boar's head or the pasty?'

'I—I don't know, sir,' said the child timidly.

'Well, we stole the boar from a very grisly ogre, so perhaps he is gristly too; but the fairies gave us the venison, so I should say have some pasty.'

'Oh, yes, sir,' cried the child eagerly, looking up and smiling at him. 'Were they the white fairies?'

'Oh, they were the exceedingly white fairies; they wash in the moonbeams—eh, what, Karl?'

'Where did you get this?' Karl had said sharply. For what he had read was:

'Most August and High-born Prince,—I am commanded to do myself the honour of informing you that if the Providence of God shall in due time add Solgau to the rest of your Highness's cares, according to the rights of Her Highness who is now your wife, His Sacred Majesty the Emperor will support your Highness in all well-doing.—And I am the humblest of your Highness's servants,

GALEAZZO.

'To the Most August, &c., &c., Prince Ludwig von Lichtenstein.'

'That? Oh that came from the fairies too. Six fairies in buff coats caught the amiable Galeazzo's couriers in the forest. Good reading, isn't it? Pretty turn for phrase Galeazzo has. Galeazzo and Ludwig in all well-doing! God bless all saints! "Her Highness who is now your wife"—I wonder why he put it that way.'

'Does the Capuchin know this?' said Karl sharply.

Bernhard thought for a moment.

'He will know it to-night,' said he. 'Have some more, Hop o' my Thumb; try the pudding, it's a very sweet pudding; see, all pink inside. Yes, and I dare swear he guessed it before.' He turned his head and looked at Karl. 'Gott! we knew Lichtenstein too well to trust him, but if he helped us to you, Karl——' and he chuckled.

'You cannot expect us to laugh with you,' said Karl.

'True enough,' said Bernhard more seriously. 'There is little reason why you should trust us, and only your honour to bid you keep faith with us. What the Capuchin may say, may have said, His Holiness knows; but I say, when I have fallen on Galeazzo and that rat in Lichtenstein is trapped, Solgau shall not fare ill for all that is past and gone. Well, Hop o' my Thumb, is the pudding good?'

'And this is why Weissberg fell,' said Karl. Bernhard nodded, and the child said:

'Very good, please, sir.'

'Quite the best of puddings, little man?'

'Yes, sir. It is—nearly—as good as baked apples,' said the child thoughtfully nodding his head.

'Oh, alas for the fame of the cook!' cried Bernhard, and he chuckled. 'Orderly!'

'Yes, sir?' said the man coming quickly in and saluting.

'Bake an apple!'

'Sir?' stammered the orderly.

'Bake an apple!' said Bernhard sharply. The orderly saluted and turned. 'And—orderly!'

'Sir?'

'Bake it well!'

'Well, you must wait for that, little man,' said Bernhard. 'And what shall we do now?' The child looked up into his smiling face and nestled against him.

'Tell me a story, sir,' he said softly.

'Tell you a story?' said Bernhard slowly. 'Yes, let me talk while you eat, Karl. I have a story to tell.' And then in French 'His mother was murdered, you said?' Karl nodded, and Bernhard thought for a moment. 'Well, I can tell it.' Karl looked up from his plate sharply, but Bernhard settled the child more easily on his knee and began to speak without a glance for Karl.

'Once upon a time, Humpty-Dumpty, there was a very pretty little white fawn, so pretty that everyone knew the fairies must have brought her straight down from heaven. And for a long time the fairies watched over her and gave her all that the loveliest fawn could want. And because she had come down to them from heaven they called her Dorothea.' Then Karl drank a great draught of wine and stared at him; and the child said softly:

'Pretty name.'

'And because she was so good,' said Duke Bernhard, 'they promised her a golden crown—a crown that her little dead brother fawn would have had; they were very strong fairies. But there was a bad man who pretended to be very fond of the fawn. One day he set his own dogs at her, and when she was very frightened he came and drove them away, and she didn't know they were his dogs, so she loved him very much because she thought he was very kind to her. She loved him so very much that when he asked her to come and live with him she was very glad, and she didn't mind leaving her fairies at all.' He paused and looked quickly at Karl.

'Go on, man,' muttered Karl.

'So she went to him, and perhaps because she was very pretty he may have been good to her at first, but what he really wanted was the golden crown the fairies had promised her. And so when he had had her only a very little while he began to grow unkind to her. I expect he beat her.'

'Did he hurt her?' said the child quickly.

'I think he hurt her very much,' said Duke Bernhard. 'But there was a big strong man there whom the fairies had sent to see that their fawn was safe. And he told the bad man to stop. But the bad man didn't stop; so the man the fairies had sent began to fight him. The bad man didn't want to fight, he was afraid; but the strong man made him. Then when they were fighting the pretty white fawn ran up to stop them, because she could not bear that they should hurt one another for her sake. And the strong man stopped fighting; but the bad man went on, and he ran his sword through the little white fawn and she died. So the bad man lost the fawn's golden crown, and the little white fawn went back to heaven.'

Karl, with his hands clenched, cried:

'Is this true? Ludwig killed her?' and Bernhard nodded. For a moment there was silence, and then Karl said between his teeth:

'God grant I may meet him!'

'But if I meet him first——' said Duke Bernhard, and he smiled grimly.

'Is that the end of the story, sir?' the child asked.

'You will hear the end some day,' said Duke Bernhard; and then in French:

'You take it quietly, Karl.'

'Quietly?' Karl cried. 'Is there any use in words? The Capuchin comes to Solgau, drags us into the war—to serve himself. Marries Dorothea to Ludwig—to serve himself. Max is murdered by Ludwig and the Frenchmen, and now Dorothea is murdered too. I have enough to say, Duke Bernhard, but what is gained by saying it? I shall keep faith with France, for all the little cause I have to love her, if France will give us justice; and if not—then, Duke Bernhard, we will strike for our own cause.'

'And if France does give you justice, what then, Karl?'

'That is for Prince Eberhard to answer,' said Karl. But Prince Eberhard was dead by his daughter's side.

'What would you answer?' Bernhard asked carelessly.

Karl paused and looked him between the eyes:

'Am I speaking to the general of France or my friend?' said he.

'What would you answer to the first?' said Bernhard.

'I would say that I had had from France more than I ever thought to get,' Karl said quietly.

'You would say no more than that?'

'I do not use many words,' said Karl.

'Gott! but you use them well,' said Bernhard, and he chuckled. 'If France gives you justice you would still be her foe?'

'Have I been unfaithful to France?'

'So: you will say nothing. I will not ask you to tell me as your friend—because I prefer to be your friend. But I'll tell you this, Karl, France has broken with Lichtenstein. I packed the pigs out of camp to-day; and I have the clearest of orders from His Holiness for Ludwig's head. And, Gott! he shall have it.'

'That is well,' said Karl with a heavy sigh.

Bernhard stretched his hand across the table and took Karl's.

'You hate the war, Karl; and the war is life to me, but I'll not say you are wrong. If I had a State like Solgau to care for—well, I have not. You hate France for dragging you into it; and I'll not say you're wrong there. But if you hate the Capuchin—Bernhard is speaking, not the Duke of Weimar—if you hate the Capuchin you are wrong.'

'Have I any reason to love him?' said Karl coldly.

'He would do more for you than you would for him,' said Bernhard.

'Let him do me justice.'

'He does—and more,' said Bernhard.

The apple came in, and Bernhard gave it to the child and set him down. He brought a chair and sat beside Karl.

'When I used to know you in Solgau, soul of Gustavus! you were not too tender, but now you're turned into granite. We broke your work in Solgau, I know; but some day you will have peace again. And I—well, for all I want your men badly enough, Bernhard of Weimar can work alone—I give you my word I will do all I can to bring you peace soon, if that is all.' Karl did not answer, and his face was very stern.

'No: that is not all, Bernhard,' he said at last. He looked into his friend's eyes. 'They don't trust me in Solgau now. I have a name to make again,' he laughed; 'a name! I have to prove that I am not a coward.'

'Pho! what do a few fools matter?' cried Bernhard.

'She is not a fool,' said Karl quietly.

'What! you care for a girl?' Karl looked at him without speaking. In the silence the child looked up at them and said:

'Please what did the fairies do, sir?' Bernhard turned quickly.

'The fairies—there is a fairy glen on the hills near the black lake, and there they waited for him, and they caught him, and they flung him in with a stone about his neck.'

'I am glad, sir,' said the child.

CHAPTER XXI.

AN EMBASSY TO AMARYLLIS.

THE Comte de Lormont was back at Solgau and his wounded arm lay in a sling of flowered silk. A basin and a spoon were on the table before him. The Comte de Lormont bent forward and sniffed at it delicately.

'That, I believe, is broth,' he said aloud. 'I am not familiar with it—ah, Pierre, is this—broth?'

'Chicken broth, Monsieur le Vicomte, as the surgeon ordered.'

'Take it to hell, Pierre; they might perhaps drink it there. Also it will be ready for the surgeon. Pass me the little dark book. Thank you.'

'But Monsieur le Vicomte must take food,' said the man anxiously.

'I believe you are right, Pierre: and so I have dined.'

'Ah, monsieur,' cried the man, 'but the surgeon said——'

'Doubtless, Pierre, he said a great deal. I should not trouble to remember it.'

Pierre went out dolefully, and Lormont, left alone, began to turn over the pages of the little dark book.

'It was very foolish of this good man to write in Latin. I suppose he knew no better. Ah, here it is: *Formosam resonare doces Amaryllida silvas*. Now that was most impertinent of Tityrus. But I believe the good man is right: 'thou dost make the woods whisper, "fair Amaryllis." I heard the woods whisper last year. It was Amaryllis they said; I believe I failed to observe it. *Formosam resonare*—come in, Pierre!—*doces Amaryllida silvas*.' He looked up, and the Capuchin was in the room.

'Do not let me interrupt your studies, Lormont.'

'Virgil is a delightful author, sir,' said Lormont. 'I can sometimes translate him.'

'Pray sit, Lormont. His epithets are well chosen.'

'We are all honoured by your approval, sir,' said Lormont.

'Does your arm give you pain?' said the Capuchin.

'It allows me, sir, to display without ostentation a most charming piece of silk,' said Lormont. He smoothed the sling gently. 'This attracted many eyes at dinner.'

'You are sure it was the silk, Lormont?'

'I have it on the best of all words—which is, of course, your own—that I am modest,' said Lormont. But the Capuchin said more seriously:

'The risk was not worth running, Lormont.'

'Oh, I ask your pardon, sir,' cried Lormont; 'if you had only seen Ludwig—he was as green as his eyes, and then white and red and purple—all in one minute. Indeed, it was quite worth running. And, my father, consider the soul of the poor sinner! Is it not well that someone should deal with him faithfully?' and Lormont stopped to yawn. 'Ah! just as I did.'

'But you are more useful alive,' said the Capuchin.

'You flatter me, sir.'

'Both to me and to the Lady Amaryllis, Lormont.'

'I believe it, sir; and yet it puzzles me. But beyond doubt worship is useful to the gods.'

'And—they deserve it, Lormont,' said the Capuchin, and he smiled in his beard. 'Perhaps she requites it also. But I trespass; I have been with the High Council of Solgau, Lormont.' Lormont sighed.

'I condole with you, sir. Do not let me keep you from your bed.'

'We have been talking of the State; there is no heir,' said the Capuchin.

'The High Council are probably talking still,' said Lormont.

'They have come to no decision.'

'I am told that they never do,' said Lormont. 'But you have, sir?' and he looked at the Capuchin.

'One man was spoken of—by the Baron von Rosenberg.' Lormont sat up in his chair.

'The Count of Erbach,' said he, and the Capuchin nodded. And they said, sir?'

'What would you say, Lormont?' and for once Lormont paused before he answered.

'I should say, sir, that it would be very well for Solgau.'

'And for France?' the Capuchin asked slowly; and Lormont paused again.

'I believe he is not a fool, sir; and I doubt he would give us no more than our due. But I think he would not forget to give us that.'

'So that if our help made him Prince in Solgau——?' the Capuchin asked, slowly again; and he looked now for a long time at Lormont while Lormont sat silent.

'Well; it is a good price, sir,' said Lormont at last. 'He would need our help?'

'The High Council think him a coward—or a fool—or a traitor—or all these things,' said the Capuchin.

'The dear good Council!' murmured Lormont.

'Will you go to the Count of Erbach, and tell him——' said the Capuchin.

'I will go and tell him our bid, sir,' said Lormont; and the Capuchin moved a little in his chair.

'I believe it is a fair offer,' said he.

'We make him prince; he makes himself our friend; oh, it is a fair price,' said Lormont, and he paused, 'for a thing of some value, sir.'

'You would call it a price?' said the Capuchin slowly.

'I call things by their names sometimes,' Lormont answered touching his moustache. 'It is when I desire to do good,' and he let his eyes fall on the Capuchin; but the Capuchin only said:

'You will make this offer, Lormont,' and Lormont bowed. 'I think it generous.'

'At least we can bid no higher, sir,' said Lormont. 'Shall I go to-night?'

'Will your arm let you travel so soon?' said the Capuchin.

'My arm,' said Lormont doubtfully, looking down at it, 'my arm would be much happier if I stayed till the morning.'

'I wish you would spare yourself more,' said the Capuchin rather gloomily; but he looked at Lormont and saw a whimsical smile. 'Ah!—you meant, of course, your wounded arm?' he said quickly.

'Faith, sir, one had the delight of suffering in a good cause. Would you grudge the other the pleasure of working in a better?'

'Doubtless I keep her waiting, Lormont,' said the Capuchin, and he rose. 'We always jest, Lormont, and I think you would have it so; but take plain speech plainly for once—one of you is to be envied, and I do not know which.'

'And that is most plain, sir,' Lormont murmured. 'I never thank you, my father; if I once began it would be tedious.'

And the Capuchin, smiling, said :

‘She waits, Lormont.’

‘Then God help me!’ cried Lormont, and he ran out.

Twilight was falling thick as he came into the western gallery of the castle, and away in an alcove he saw a touch of light where Amaryllis stood. She looked all round her.

‘Oh! . . . I wonder if he is gone?’ she said aloud.

Then the Comte de Lormont sighed loudly and sat down as if he had not seen her. Amaryllis heard him, and whether she saw him or not she said quite loudly :

‘I shall never come again!’ and she walked quickly away. And the Comte de Lormont sighed again. But Amaryllis went on; and the further she went the slower she walked.

‘She has beyond doubt forgotten that there is no way out,’ said the Comte de Lormont thoughtfully. Amaryllis turned quickly, and a cold voice far away in the twilight said :

‘Will you be kind enough to leave the gallery, monsieur?’

‘Monsieur?’ murmured Lormont. ‘Monsieur? I do not know him. Monsieur! reveal yourself!’ he cried; and he came very quickly to Amaryllis. ‘There is here no monsieur, my lady,’ he said; ‘my lady Brown-eyes,’ and he took her hand.

‘I have told you to go once, monsieur,’ said Amaryllis, pulling her hand away. ‘And my hand is my own, monsieur,’ and she put it behind her. Lormont bowed :

‘You have said it, mademoiselle,’ said he, and he turned away. But as he walked back down the gallery a soft voice said wistfully :

‘But you did come late.’ Lormont was back at her side.

‘Indeed, I was ashamed to come before, Amaryllis,’ said he; and now the hand came to his of its own will. Lormont kissed it, and holding it still high: ‘I have lost one of your gloves,’ he said dolefully.

‘Oh! And I worked them myself!’ cried Amaryllis. ‘Indeed, I wonder that you dare tell me.’ But she did not take away her hand, and Lormont led her to the seat in the alcove, and they sat down together.

‘And I threw it away, too,’ said Lormont sadly, and he shook his head.

‘I do think you need not have been careless,’ said Amaryllis tearfully. ‘Oh, wait till I give you something else, monsieur!’ and she tossed her head and drew away from him.

‘Yes, I threw it in Ludwig’s face,’ said Lormont carelessly.

'Pearls before swine; he would not even pick it up. And he liked it so ill that he shot at me for it.'

'Ah! does it hurt, Léon?' cried Amaryllis.

'Why, the left must be idler than ever. But the right, it can do its work still, Peach-blossom! May it work and be happy?'

'I cannot have you be idle,' said Amaryllis; and as his right arm fell round her waist she came very close to him, and the dying light fell across the drooping curves of her neck where the dark dress hid it. 'And you use my gifts very well.' Lormont kissed her.

'I will use one of them well,' said he, and he kissed her again. She blushed and smiled:

'You will throw me away, too?'

'Now that is a challenge,' said Lormont, and he bent to kiss her again, but she hid her face. 'And I cannot take it up. I have only one hand.' He looked at the golden brown curls on the back of her neck. 'So unfair, so unfair!'

'Indeed, I may be; but you should not say it,' said Amaryllis; and then looking up at him with her face unguarded: 'Am I—so very unfair?' and she gave him her lips.

'Are you answered?' said Lormont. 'And indeed, my lady, there is reason why you should not deny them to me. To-morrow I go away.'

'Oh, but your arm is not well,' cried Amaryllis.

'My arm; oh, that will heal well enough once it is quit of the surgeon. And I am not going fighting—ah! and I have come on an embassy, my lady Amaryllis.'

'But of course you mean something else! Which something else do you mean?'

'It was the plain truth,' said Lormont, 'the plain truth—my lady's ugly brother. I come on an embassy. I want to know how you think of the Count of Erbach?'

'Karl?' said Amaryllis quickly. 'Karl? why—I think they are all wrong—I am sure he is not a coward—and—and he loves Yolande, Léon.'

'Yes,' said Lormont thoughtfully. 'And she?'

'Ah, Léon!' said Amaryllis softly, and she looked up into his face with tears in her deep brown eyes and a wistful little smile clinging round her lips. The Comte de Lormont understood; and accordingly he kissed her.

'So,' he said again. 'Then if he knows that——'

'Do men always know?' said Amaryllis very softly.

'But if he loves——' and Amaryllis nodded and smiled. 'Then he would give much to be again a great man in Solgau.' He looked at Amaryllis thoughtfully.

'Oh, you are going to him,' cried Amaryllis, and Lormont started.

'Faith, I must tell you nothing, my lady. And you will forgive me.'

'Indeed, I did not mean to ask you,' said Amaryllis quickly. 'But, Léon—if you can you will help him, will you not? Make the people think much of him again, so that everyone in Solgau will honour him as they used. If he has a chance he will make them do it, and you will help him, Léon, for me?' She looked up at him eagerly, and Lormont said, kissing her:

'The ambassador hereby promises.'

But afterwards as Lormont sat alone in his room:

'I wonder what I have promised,' he said to himself.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE SURPRISE OF THE BARON VON ROSENBERG.

THE Comte de Lormont knew himself far more thoroughly than most men endeavour to know themselves, but even he found his knowledge often incomplete as well as amusing. But to him it befell (and in this his fate was doubtless unique) that someone should know him much better than he knew himself. It becomes, when considered carefully, a ridiculous supposition that a girl who had known him only a few months should understand him better than several years' study had enabled a cleverer man than she to do. Probably it appears humiliating as well as ridiculous. Nevertheless, while the Comte de Lormont was wondering what he had promised, Amaryllis knew quite well; and also she believed (so heartily that all knowledge was out of the question) that by the grace of Léon d'Avreux de Lormont the desires of her heart were coming to pass. There have been many women since Cœnone was left on the mountain who have believed like Amaryllis and found Cœnone's reward, and if you choose to condemn yourself the right is yours to call them fools. But after you have proved your own wisdom you may do well to find time to remember that

everyone is not like yourself : in an unequal world there may be some men worth trusting. So when Amaryllis meets Léon de Lormont, and whispers something in the foolish way of these foolish women, it is often better to give monsieur the path. It is a humiliating world—the heavens are falling, and a man steps out to prop them up ; great indeed is the mind of man, his unconquerable resolve, his unfailing wit. The heavens are stayed : it is time to thank our saviour—there she sits, a chit of a girl.

Because Amaryllis knew something of this by her birthright, her eyes were shining with happiness, not all her own, as she went back to her sister. Yolande sat in the darkness with a book on her knees.

‘Oh, my dear, it is far too dark to read,’ cried Amaryllis.

‘It has grown dark,’ said Yolande.

‘Why—I didn’t go till twilight !’ said Amaryllis sitting on a stool at her sister’s feet. ‘I cannot have been very long.’

‘I am sure you don’t know.’

‘Well—perhaps I don’t know very much,’ Amaryllis admitted very softly, and she nestled against Yolande’s knee. Yolande put her arm round Amaryllis’s neck, and Amaryllis took the hand in both of hers and pressed it, but neither of them spoke : then Yolande sighed. Amaryllis, drawing the hand closer to her, said softly :

‘Yolande, Léon is going to Karl. He promised me to help Karl so that Karl may come back again—like—like the old times.’ But Yolande only said with a break in her voice :

‘The old times ! Ah, they are gone,’ and she laughed a little bitterly.

‘They will come again,’ said Amaryllis. ‘He promised me,’ and Yolande laughed again.

‘Yes, but what can he do ?’ she cried. ‘And what I have said to him ! He could not forgive, he could not care now !’

‘Ah, but Yolande is Yolande,’ said Amaryllis softly, and she pressed her sister’s hand. ‘And—I know—Yolande will be Yolande always, I know !’

‘I do not know, dear,’ said Yolande, ‘and that is why it is so hard. And I—oh, what I said ! But I did only want him to be great ; and then on the stair—— ! It did seem—they said—ah, but I should have known,’ she cried, and her cheeks were wet. Amaryllis slipped on to her knee and kissed her.

‘He will come back, and he will forgive you. Who is there

who would not forgive you, dear? And, Yolande, you will be happy—ah, so happy!’

‘If—if he could forgive me!’ said Yolande with a sob.

There were heavy steps in the passage, and a gruff voice:

‘Well, Baron, I’ll come in. I suppose there will be the lasses to look at, but as for convincing me—pho, man; you can’t do it!’

The door opened:

‘Dark, hey!’ grunted the Baron von Rosenberg.

‘Indeed, father, if you had told us we were to have a visitor we would have been fit to see in the light,’ said Amaryllis through the darkness.

‘And I dare swear you are, lass!’ said the Count of Hilpertsee.

‘So pretty a compliment; and you do not dare often!’ cried Amaryllis. ‘And, indeed, I would make you a curtsy if you could see it.’

‘And as I can’t, lass?’

‘As you can’t—why, swear I have made it!’

‘Oh, I suppose you are grown too big!’ said the Count of Hilpertsee.

Then in the darkness Amaryllis’s voice said:

‘Why, if you would stoop—and as it is quite dark——’ and the Count of Hilpertsee took her at her word.

Then two servants came in with candles, and the Count, looking down at her smiling, dimpled face, said:

‘But what would monsieur say, lass?’ and he chuckled.

‘I think monsieur would say you were very lucky,’ said Amaryllis. ‘Oh, I dare swear he would!’

‘Gott! what is one among so many? Eh, lass?’ said the Count.

‘Why, it is not to be talked about,’ said Amaryllis. The grizzled old Count of Hilpertsee sat down with a chuckle, and:

‘I won’t tell, lass,’ said he.

‘Indeed, I am not ashamed of you,’ said Amaryllis, quickly. ‘And I think I began when I was a baby.’

‘Yes, you rogue; and you’ve witched us all ever since,’ said the Count, patting her head.

‘Yes, we’re all under her little thumb,’ said her father; ‘she makes love to all of us.’

‘Oh, I do do silly things,’ cried Amaryllis; and she shot a quick glance at Yolande to see if the tears were dry. ‘Of course.

I have to do like my elders and betters,' and she made them two little curtsies to keep their eyes on her.

'Humph! we may be silly, you rogue,' said the Count of Hilpertsee, and put his arm round her waist. 'At least each of us thinks the other is—eh, Hermann?' and he turned to the Baron von Rosenberg.

'Oh, have you been quarrelling?' cried Amaryllis.

'No, you rogue; we're too old to find that pleasant. But—Gott, yes—you'll agree with me, Yolande, if this little lass won't. You send him off in disgrace, and quite right too. Here is the Baron talks of making that coward Karl Prince in Solgau.'

'Karl, Prince of Solgau!' cried Amaryllis quickly clapping her hands. 'Oh, father, is it true?' Her father shook his head.

'I'm only one, lass,' said he.

'One? God be thanked, yes!' growled the Count. 'A man that would not lift a finger before Ludwig. Gott! a man that wouldn't even meet an insult—'

'Of course the Count of Erbach is not here,' said Yolande scornfully. The Count started.

'Not here? What? Do you think I would not say it to his face?'

'You choose a woman to say it to,' said Yolande, thrusting blindly in her pain. 'No doubt you would say—say—a great deal.' The Count gripped the arm of his chair.

'Say? What? God's death! D'ye mean——?' he stammered, and then he remembered that it was a girl who had spoken. 'Why, why, lass, you may tell me I am a coward and I can laugh. But——'

'Oh, insults mean nothing, do they?' cried Yolande. 'You may say all the worst things in your own mind to a man, and if he will not answer because he has greater things to do, because he is wiser—far, far wiser—than you, you may go about calling him a coward when he is not there to answer. Indeed we have nobles in Solgau!' And the Baron von Rosenberg stood amazed.

'Why, but you said them yourself, lass!' growled the Count.

'I—I was wrong,' said Yolande unsteadily, and a dark blush came over her face. Amaryllis slipped away from the Count's arm.

'Indeed, Count, I think you are very foolish,' she cried sharply, and she moved the candles so that Yolande was in shadow, snuffing one of them for excuse; 'and you are just like this candle, you sputter and splutter and make a lot of very foolish noise, and

then you are kind enough to say you will not fight us. Oh, you are very good to us both, Count of Hilpertsee.'

'What, are you of the enemy too?' cried the Count.

'I am one of the friends of Solgau, if it please you, sir,' said Amaryllis with a very low curtsey, 'and I wish one of its bitterest enemies wisdom—just a little wisdom.'

The Baron von Rosenberg had come to Yolande and laid his hand very gently on her shoulder. He had a vague notion that he ought to do more, but he did not know what to do. And he was very much surprised.

'Well, lass, I meant to hurt no one,' said the Count of Hilpertsee, finding himself somewhat ashamed. 'I—I talk like a man; and you are girls. I never meant to hurt you,' he said again, looking at Yolande. 'For the man, well, we shall see; let him do something—let him do something; that is all I ask.'

'And if he does?' said Amaryllis quickly. 'When you do at last know you are wrong, what then?'

'Well, he has some of the blood,' growled the Count. 'That is what your father said. If he were not—'

'He is not!' cried Amaryllis, and she came back to the Count's side and took his arm to her again.

'Well, we used to trust him—and if Rosenberg backs him—' growled the Count to himself.

'And Hilpertsee,' said Amaryllis very quietly. But the Count jumped up.

'Gott! I shall be sorry for what you make me say,' cried he. 'You rogue, you twist me round and round. Thank God, you do not come to the Council. I must go; Gott, I must go! Yolande, I never meant to hurt you. Give you good night, Baron. Good night, you rogue!' and he went out.

The Baron von Rosenberg sat by Yolande and kissed her, and drew her closer to him and took her hand in his; he said nothing, he remembered her mother. And Yolande, leaning against her father, was happier than she had been for many days, but she hardly knew why. Amaryllis moved the candles away to the end of the room and sat down to her work. She began a new pair of gloves, and as she worked there were two little dimples that came in her cheeks.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE COMTE DE LORMONT SPEAKS FOR HIMSELF.

IN Duke Bernhard's camp Karl passed his days in endless work with the army of Solgau. Bernhard could make little of him; short answers, and hardly a word that was not an answer, came from Karl. The news of the death of Prince Eberhard came, set the men of Solgau in amazement for a day, and was news no longer. To Karl it was little but another count in the long score against Ludwig, and he put the news away in his mind till the work that lay before him was done. But for all this fierce energy and for all his resolve not to think yet of the empty throne of Solgau, sometimes when his thoughts were dwelling on Yolande it came into his mind stealthily. He was not a man to care for the name and the pomp of the prince, and he did not believe that Yolande would love him the more because he sat in the gilded chair and the trumpets sounded thrice at his entry; but he did care for the power, and he did believe that if he could show her and show Solgau that he was the worthiest man to be its prince she might love him then. So he became anxious to devise ways of making Yolande love him, and found more than one, as men often do find many ways of doing something that is done already.

Thus half unconsciously Karl grew eager to fill the throne of Solgau while the Comte de Lormont rode on his way to offer this very thing; and one afternoon Karl came back to his tent to find Lormont waiting for him.

'You want Duke Bernhard, Monsieur le Comte?' said Karl. 'His tent is——'

'Extremely bare, Count,' said Lormont. 'But indeed I think you have the advantage of him,' and he glanced round the tent, for he was sitting on the only chair. 'Shall I sit on the table, or will you?' he asked rising slowly.

'Pray sit, monsieur,' Karl said quickly. 'You wish to speak with me?'

'Why, I am afraid it is my duty to bore you for a little if you will permit me. But pray let me take the table.' Karl called for another chair.

'You come from Père Joseph, monsieur?'

'His Excellency begged me to convey to you his salutations,' said Lormont, and Karl bowed gravely. 'You have no doubt

heard of what has happened in Lichtenstein and Solgau?' Karl bowed again. 'I have to offer you as the Marshal of Solgau the regrets of my master for the ill fate that has befallen your country.' And again Karl bowed. 'You are perhaps aware that France is no longer the ally of Lichtenstein?'

'I have heard as much from Duke Bernhard,' said Karl.

'It was inevitable, of course,' said Lormont; 'as we desired to keep faith with Solgau.'

'You are very good, monsieur,' said Karl gravely; and then Lormont dropped his formal tone.

'Indeed it would have been better if we had been quicker to do it,' and he paused for Karl to answer. 'Ah, you think we are fond of words. Perhaps—pardon my speaking of myself—but perhaps we shall know one another better if I tell you that I did what a man can to make Ludwig fight me.' Karl laughed shortly.

'You are not a woman,' said he, but he gave Lormont a friendlier glance. 'When was it, monsieur?'

'I was sent to bid him make allies of his own kind,' said Lormont, 'and at the end, why, I suppose I grew angry. So did he.' Karl smiled grimly.

'Your arm, monsieur? Did you offer that on the altar of Solgau?'

'That was the musketeers of the amiable Ludwig,' Lormont admitted; 'but as for making a sacrifice, why I do not sacrifice to the devil. At least you will understand that I do not love Ludwig tenderly, and though I am French allow me some white-wash to my vices'; and he looked keenly at Karl.

'The preface is well enough, monsieur,' said Karl with a smile.

'I am not sure that it is a preface,' said Lormont quickly. 'But I did not come to parade a sling. Prince Eberhard is dead; his children died before him. There is, Count, no heir in Solgau.'

'So I had supposed,' Karl answered.

'Yet there is a throne,' said Lormont with one quick glance at Karl. 'It would be for the good of Solgau that it should have someone to sit on it.'

'That is a matter for the High Council of Solgau.'

'Oh, beyond doubt,' cried Lormont; 'and yet—they cannot all be princes together.'

'Is there a proposal to divide the throne?' said Karl.

'You would suspect the Council of that?' said Lormont quickly.

'I was trying to interpret your words.'

'Oh I am quite simple,' said Lormont. 'Your name, I think, was spoken of,' and he gave Karl another keen glance.

'I imagine you are mistaken,' said Karl quietly.

'I am seldom mistaken when I am interested,' said Lormont. 'And I believe, Count, that you are of the royal blood.'

'You say too much, monsieur. I have a little—like others.'

'Others? Ah, yes, the Count of Hilpertsee. Now, the Count is a worthy man; but I do not think he ever conceived himself a prince.'

'Nor have I,' said Karl quickly; and that was not quite true, though he did not know it. But Lormont knew better.

'No?' he said. 'It might be worth a little thought, Count.' He paused for a moment and went on softly. 'Therefore I have come to ask you if you would be the man to sit in that gilded chair.'

'I did not know that the throne of Solgau was for France to offer,' said Karl quietly.

'Oh, we will not play with forms,' cried Lormont. 'A strong man is needed in Solgau, Count; and—give even France her due—we come to you who do not love us because we would make up to Solgau for some of the harm we have done. These are not times for weaklings. If the State is to be kept safe and happy there must be a man over her who has a mind and a will. I do not talk to flatter you. I give you what you will answer; it is better for us, and we know it is better, that our allies should be well led. But remember that if it is better for us it is far better for Solgau. And—there are those in Solgau, Count, who ask nothing more than to see you come back in honour—your old honour and more—to the people who—love you,' he dropped the last words slowly. But Karl only answered coldly:

'You come from Père Joseph?'

'I do come from Père Joseph; perhaps you hate him, and though you are wrong there is reason. But what is that to the purpose? Here is a chance to do what you will with the State you worked for before we came.' And Karl said:

'You do not come from the Council of Solgau?'

'Is it a time to stand on forms?' cried Lormont. 'You know as well as I that you are the best man, the only man to govern Solgau. The place is open—will you take it?'

'Then the Council would not have me be Prince?' said Karl.

'The Council? Pho, you know the Council well enough. They meet, and a fool speaks his folly and another fool caps it, and

so they talk on and on and on, and the world goes by and still the Council are talking.'

'You said my name was spoken of. I see they did not accept it. You have been good enough to ask me to force myself on Solgau by the aid of France. It is a very pleasant way, monsieur, of binding the Prince of Solgau to serve France through good and ill. Why you should think I will sell myself to France I do not know.'

Lormont leant back in his chair and sighed :

'You wrong us, Count, and yet you will not believe it. Well, I will be frank with you, if you will hear me out. The Council did not accept you ; but the Council, what are they ? They think you a coward because you did not do the impossible ; they think you are afraid of war and afraid of Ludwig, and afraid of them, and afraid of a fool who jostles you in a doorway. The Council are fools. You think France would buy you for her tool : if we make you prince we ask you to keep the alliance, but you may have it on my word we shall ask you to do no more. And will any man who is prince be able to do less ? You must keep us at least till you have crushed Ludwig. Then I suppose you hope to throw us away. Can you ? Think of it every way ; if we would have a prince to be our slave is it likely we should have chosen you ? There are men easier to command than you.'

'I believe you say what you think, monsieur,' said Karl slowly. 'I believe you have been frank with me, and perhaps I have wronged you.' Lormont bowed. 'And yet see what you offer me, even if I take your word for France. I am to force myself on my own people, my own friends, by the aid of those through whom the Prince and his heirs lie dead. Let all the rest be—is that a thing that I can do ?'

'Force yourself on your own friends ?' Lormont repeated slowly. 'You have friends in Solgau who would be glad enough that you should be their master.'

'Have I ?' said Karl coldly. 'I should be ashamed to meet them if I were brought back by your arms. Well, monsieur, I believe you have spoken like a friend, and, though I do not know why, I thank you. But I shall not use aid from France.'

For a minute or two Lormont sat silent, and then he looked up and said :

'I have spoken for France, Count ; and you have heard, so far as my brains would serve me, I spoke for her well. I wonder if the Count of Erbach would believe a Frenchman if he should say that he speaks only for himself ?'

'I have no right to distrust you, monsieur,' said Karl.

'Then I shall not say I think you right or wrong, and why should you care for my judgment? Other people's judgments are useful to listen to while you believe they are wrong; if you begin to think them right, they are in the way—your pardon! I am talking folly—you see I speak for myself—there is one thing I must say, and I am not sure whether it is folly or not. A little while ago, Count, I made a promise, and I shall not tell you what it is, for I do not very clearly know. It was made to the Lady Amaryllis of Rosenberg; it had something to do with you, and whatever it was, I believe I have to be your friend. You probably think me impertinent; many people make that mistake, and it is not even always a mistake. But I thought you might be glad to know that such a promise was asked of me by such a lady. I am not so foolish as to offer you pity or help, because you do not appear to me to be a child. What I am trying to say—and you see how I blunder over it, for it is a strange thing to blurt out after such talk as this—what I am trying to say is that there is more than one lady in Rosenberg who wishes well to the Count of Erbach. You start. In some sense I have a right to say it, and for my right you may ask the Lady Amaryllis. And I have wished to speak as your friend.' Karl had risen, and was looking out of the tent door into the night, and Lormont, coming behind him, laid his hand on Karl's arm. The two men stood together in silence for some time, and then:

'You have,' said Karl.

'Amaryllis said it,' said Lormont, and was wise enough to stop. He heard Karl sigh; and he knew that his embassy was not in vain.

'I suppose you must have peace, too?' said Lormont at last.

'I would have peace,' said Karl.

That night the Comte de Lormont lay long awake, and in the morning he complained of the ground; but it was not of the ground that he thought as he lay on it still with wide open eyes till the night was old. He was thinking of what he had promised Amaryllis, and wondering how he could keep his promise. France had made her highest bid, and failed. Then the man wanted peace. The man was most impracticable; and yet as he spoke for Solgau he was right enough; that was what made it so irritating.

And Amaryllis lay asleep with her head on her arm, smiling.

(To be continued.)

The Donna Knitting Society.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,

I shall be very grateful if you will give me space for a few words, in the interests of the poor 'East-enders' for whom the readers of your Magazine have done so much.

I have received many inquiries as to whether the DONNA KNITTING SOCIETY still exists; and most of the old members have left off sending their yearly gifts of 'woollies' since notices of the Society have ceased to appear in LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

May I therefore explain that these notices were only inserted in LONGMAN'S as a few incidental words in articles on the 'DONNA FOOD TRUCK,' which was supported by the readers of the Magazine? This latter was given up in 1898, but the 'D. K. S.', which grew out of it, and began in the winter of 1890-91, has continued its work ever since, though crippled by so many members ceasing to send valuable contributions of woollies and *old clothes*, which latter are much prized.

There is but ONE RULE for members of the Society: TO SEND AT LEAST ONE WOOLLEN COMFORTER, PAIR OF SOCKS, VEST, OR OTHER GARMENT, IN KNITTING, CROCHET, OR MATERIAL, ANY TIME IN THE WINTER OF EACH YEAR, TO THE HON. SEC., 'MISS TRENCH, D. K. S., PULHAM ST. MARY, NORFOLK.'

When about a hundred articles are collected they are sent off to different centres of work amongst the poorest East-enders in London, and are most highly valued by those whose experience enables them to distribute such comforts wisely, especially as Christmas gifts.

During the winter of 1895-6, 813 woollen articles were sent, and ten sacks-full despatched to London. Last winter only 186 articles were received.

I am anxious, therefore, to assure all former contributors that their gifts will be gratefully received and used, as from the first, and to beg of them to continue their own kind help to the 'D. K. S.' and also to try to get fresh members to join the Society.

I am, dear Mr. Editor,

Yours very truly,

THE AUTHOR OF 'CHARLES LOWDER.'

November 1902.

At the Sign of the Ship.

CIRCUMSTANCES prevented me from saying a word of regret for the death of the late Mr. George Douglas Brown, author of *The House with Green Shutters*, when the unhappy news arrived. In the October number of *The Bookman* the world has the opportunity of reading the admirable essay of Mr. Melrose on his friend, a man certainly of genius; of how much, and of what quality, we shall never now be able to estimate. The name of 'George Douglas,' on the title page of the novel, was unfamiliar, except in the case of Sir George Douglas of Springwood. The book reached us unheralded. There had been none of the 'puffs preliminary' which obligingly inform us, in certain cases, that 'something very delightful but rather solemn' is about to arise in the world of books. Even in Miss Austen's day Miss Catherine Morland, at Bath, had learned that 'something horrid was to come out in London.' The lady was supposed to mean that a revolutionary movement was impending; but, in fact, she referred to an expected romance in the manner of her beloved (and justly beloved) Mrs. Radcliffe. Mr. Brown's book was 'horrid' enough, but we had received no warning. The reviewer takes up each new novel by an unknown author listlessly enough; they are so numerous, and resemble each other so much. In a careless temper I opened Mr. Brown's book, and then, looking at my watch after what seemed a short interval, I found it long past bedtime. In the interest aroused by these dreadful dwellers in Barbie, every one of them mean and malignant in a distinct and special manner, one 'forgot all time,' like the poet at cat's-cradle with a beloved object.

* * *

'The novel of misery' (concerning the species see *The Quarterly Review*) is my aversion. Yet here was a novel of

misery which one could not lay down. Here was not the pathos of Mr. Ian Maclaren, nor the many excellent humours of Mr. Barrie, nor a gleam of sunshine or of romance, but here was observation extraordinarily close and minute, directed wholly to the seamy side of the small Scottish trading classes in a remote rural town. Of course no community is all seamy side. There are 'Scots malignant' in whom a grudging envy is the prevailing temper; but nowhere are there none but malignant Scots, as in Mr. Brown's book. He told me that he knew this defect in his novel. But, he said, whenever he longed to introduce a little relief, the memory of the doings of an effusive Kailyard novelist arose before him, and he felt obliged to deepen the shadows. He meant to do something more human, more cheerful, more life-like, in short, but it was not to be. Anything vapid he could never have done.

* * *

Mr. Melrose tells the story of the composition of the novel, originally a tale of about the fifth of the size of the ordinary romance, and expanded on his suggestion. The author saw its obvious faults, but found that it must go to the world as it was. He thought it good enough. 'He was not humble about his book and its success, but he remained practically unaffected by it.' He had wakened from a life of ordinary hack-work to find himself, in a sense, famous; and it is most melancholy to think how brief was the span in which he had the pleasure of recognition. He was no great reader, it seems, except of Shakespeare; even Carlyle he seems to have missed, that idol of most young Scots, and he had never opened Hawthorne. Somehow many men of literary originality appear to be the reverse of wide readers; one marvels at their slender libraries, their scantily tenanted shelves. The bookworm is almost an extinct reptile. Cruising about the Highlands, all through autumn, I met at a remote inn a lady who casually brought down to the dinner-table three books. Here, at last, was a kindred bookworm; but Mr. Brown was none. I presume that mankind is the book of the novelist; Dickens was no reader; the novelists of wide reading, I venture to think, are but three, and they are long dead. Fielding was the earliest of the three; everyone can guess the names of the others. Perhaps we should add

Lord Lytton, who had read a great deal that lay out of the beaten tracks.

* * *

If life for ever
Could run like a river,

and if bookworms were more common, I could find it in my heart to write a tome on popular poetry. The late learned Professor Child left all the materials in his *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, as far as our country is concerned, but he gave us no treatise on the general subject. Mr. Henderson, in his beautiful and learned new edition of Scott's *Border Minstrelsy*,¹ does me the honour to keep mentioning, not with approval, my own ideas, or rather what he takes to be my own ideas, about these matters. I am not aware that Mr. Henderson has made any profound studies of the popular poetry of the world, nor do I think it necessary to criticise his criticisms of myself. To extract the opinions of Professor Child, opinions buried in his vast edition of our ballads, is an arduous task, which nobody here or in America seems inclined to attempt. It allures one; but then, too clearly, not a hundred people care a plack about the problem of the popular origins of poetry, of all literature. If a man works at it he must work for his own pleasure and instruction, certain of public indifference and of hasty uninstructed criticism.

* * *

In the spacious times of great Elizabeth, ballad-makers were on a very low level. In 1600 Kemp, an adventurer, printed a 'Request to the Impudent Generation of Ballad Makers,' addressing them as 'My Notable Shake-Rags.' Can this be another hit at Shakespeare? These ballad-makers of 1600 were mere journalists in rhyme, such as Thomas Deloney, and a penny poet who wrote 'the miserable stolen story of Macdoel, or Macdobeth, or Mac-somewhat.' There was a crowd of these ballad-makers whose rubbish was sold by Shakespeare's Autolycus. They mainly dealt with the affairs of the day; for, example, later (1662) with the 'Drummer of Tedworth.' Our immortal ballads 'came otherwise,' and have other topics.

* * *

The topic of literary origins, and of early literary evolution—which Mr. Henderson so airily dismisses—will no young student

¹ Blackwood.

take it up? I cannot blame Mr. Henderson for not doing so in an edition of the *Border Minstrelsy*. Therein Scott gives his own theories, highly *a priori*, for he had not the materials which we possess. If anybody will but think of it he must see that just as law grew slowly out of custom, as science grew out of magic, as society was developed out of lower combinations of groups and tribes, as religion itself exists only in the forms which, out of many forms, were fittest to survive, so literature must inevitably have been evolved out of the songs and stories and dramatic ballets of peoples who, like the old Hermit of Prague, 'never saw pen and ink.' There is no race without its oral literature, its stories, songs, hymns, dirges, and so forth. Out of these inevitably came stronger and more permanent forms with the extension and consolidation of society. Now, just as the nascent forms of law, religion, ritual, and the rest, endure in peasant custom and magic, in the shape of half-sportive survivals, so the germinal shapes of prose romance exist with modifications in the tales; and some of the germinal forms of poetry in the ballads, dirges, lullabies, and personal lyrics of the Finnish, Spanish, Italian, Romaic, Magyar, Breton, Gaelic, Irish, and other European peasantries. It is so, and it must be so, unless literature was evolved in a special way, and not as law, art, religion, ritual, and other institutions were developed. Unless all our researches into the beginnings of culture are conducted in an erroneous way, literary origins ought to be studied by precisely the same method. Literature, like everything human, must have grown and been modified with the growth and the modifications of society. The thing is true, though it does not yet seem to be a truism. The truth is recognised, in a vague way, but nobody sets about the history of literary evolution. He would starve in his labour, the bold man who set himself to the task, because, as I candidly admit, 'there is no money in it.' Moreover it is probable that, with our materials, some of the problems involved are insoluble. But there the subject is, for anyone in search of a subject and independent of royalties on his book. Perhaps a professor, being endowed and in possession of dollars, might carry further the work of the late Professor Child. If he does, he must go outside the region of white men, as Dr. Brinton did, and as Mr. Cushing, Mr. Howitt, Miss Alice Fletcher, and others have done, in America, Australia, and Africa. 'It is a large order,' and requires leisure and capital. Meanwhile, with obvious exceptions, our University Professors of Literature do not seem men very

strenuous in the production of original literary work, or in original research. Among the exceptions is Mr. Saintsbury, whose second volume of the *History of Criticism*¹ enters the room as I write. There, indeed, is 'a large order,' a great adventure gallantly achieved, the History of Criticism from Erasmus to Voltaire. The topic interests me not very much more than my ideal work on 'The Origins of Literature' might perhaps interest Mr. Saintsbury. But here is 'something accomplished, something done,' beyond giving lectures and reading thousands of class essays and exercises. I think that Mr. Saintsbury is *not* a member of the British Academy of Letters.

* * *

Unlike the Continental and American Universities, we have no dissertations for doctors' degrees. These seem rather useful things; the student has to get a theme up for himself, like, for example, Mr. Charles Peppler, of Emory College, who sends me his thesis for the doctor's degree in Johns Hopkins University. We used to have these exercises in Scotland: the young Earl of Gowrie wrote his in the thick of a cheerful conspiracy (1593), and Scott selected the odd theme of the 'Disposal of the Dead Bodies of Criminals.' Mr. Peppler writes on 'Comic Terminations in Aristophanes' and in Mr. Kipling. Personally I see nothing comic in writing 'Arabites' for 'Arabians,' or anything original in writing 'gleesome' for 'gleeful.' Is not 'gleesome' good English? Mr. James Payn, in a poem on his dog, calls him

A gleesome, fleasome, affectionate beast,
Last at a fray and first at a feast.

'Fleasome' seems original, comic too, rather, but 'gleesome' is neither. Mr. Peppler's is a remarkably erudite and interesting study, but too technical for consideration in this place.

* * *

Another very learned work is Mr. W. J. Ford's *Cambridge University Cricket Club, 1820-1901*.² As too often happens, valuable MS. materials have been lost, but Mr. Ford has been happy in securing reminiscences from Mr. Jenner-Fust, who played in the first match with Oxford (1827), and from Mr. Broughton, another distinguished immortal. Mr. Ford is a most

¹ Blackwood.

² Blackwood.

delightful writer on cricket, genial, learned, lively, and fair to the last degree. I have seen, alas! about twenty-eight University matches, and how many a happy day these records bring back to memory, with other thoughts, among the saddest in human fortunes, concerning the light-hearted lads who wore the blue, and whom we shall not see again. Mr. Ford's anecdotes are admirably told, and I learn for the first time that there is the most incredible conflict of evidence as to what occurred in Mr. Cobden's famous final over of 1870. He did the hat trick, he won the match, bowling the last three wickets in three consecutive balls. But bowlers, batsmen, fielders, and spectators differ inconceivably as to what happened concerning the preceding ball. Was it hit to Mr. Bourne or Mr. Scott? Mr. Scott says to himself, Mr. Henry Perkins says to Mr. Bourne; Mr. Bourne says that he fielded the ball, at the off side. Mr. Scott was on the on side, yet he, and others who looked on, maintain that Mr. Scott was the fielder. Mr. Hill, the striker, believes that Mr. Bourne fielded the ball, saved a four, and, as one was run, let in the three unfortunates whom Mr. Cobden dismissed. Mr. Cobden, the bowler, says that Mr. Bourne was the fielder. Mr. Hannam agrees. Mr. Almack backs Mr. Scott. Now, how can either Mr. Scott or Mr. Bourne be wrong? It was, as it chanced, perhaps the most important moment in their cricketing careers. Neither Mr. Bourne nor Mr. Scott takes any credit for a good but not extraordinary piece of fielding, but each is positive that he was the fielder. The problem of evidence rivals the Elizabeth Channing and the Annesley cases. As the bowler and the batsman agree with Mr. Bourne, I, on the whole, prefer his evidence. Now, if evidence as to a ghost was so conflicting, people would say that there was no ghost. But that ball *was* fielded, either by Mr. Bourne or Mr. Scott. Mr. Cobden remarks that he merely bowled two straight balls (the first wicket fell to a catch) and '*The batsmen did the rest.*' Nerves did it. (See Ford on the Nervous System, pp. 62, 80.) Mr. Ward really did the best bowling (3 for 32, 6 for 29). It is curious that Mr. Cobden is rather low down in the analyses of bowling in University matches. Taking into consideration the number of balls bowled, Mr. A. G. Steel reads best (9 runs a wicket, 38 wickets, 1,235 balls), and Mr. C. T. Studd comes next. Mr. Douglas reads 1 wicket, 97 runs, 140 balls. Did he not meet Mr. V. T. Hill on his day? Mr. R. Lang's analysis is remarkable, but wickets were queer in the 'sixties. Mr. Powys (balls 473, runs 153, wickets 24, average

4·71) is astonishing. He slung in very fast left-handers, very low, and a great percentage shot. Even on our artificial wickets I think that Mr. Powys would have provided shooters. However, Mr. A. G. Steel is the best University bowler 'my two eyes ever did see.' Mr. Yonge, of very ancient days, Mr. C. D. Marsham, Mr. Butler, Mr. Cecil Boyle (who died the death of fame in South Africa), Mr. A. H. Evans, and (on one day, when he nearly pulled the match out of the fire) Mr. Berkeley were the best Oxford bowlers of my memory. Mr. Ford mentions the doubts about Mr. Evans's delivery. In my poor opinion there may have been a casual throw, now and then, but the bowling *was* fair. Mr. Evans hung a little at the end of his backward swing, getting a few additional inches on to it, and that perhaps caused the doubts.

* . *

As to the dubious catch of Mr. Leslie, in 1881, when he retired to the Pavilion but was given not out, getting 70, Mr. Ford, who was looking on, said, 'Well, I'm hanged if I would have gone off for that without appealing.' Mr. A. F. J. Ford caught and threw up the ball, and Mr. Leslie walked away. I was sitting in front of the Pavilion, with Sir William Anson, I think. I believe that I said, 'Why is he coming away?' and that my companion, like myself, thought it no catch. Someone cried, 'Ask how it was.' Mr. Leslie walked back and appealed, and was given not out. Mr. Ford says that Mr. Patterson, at the other wicket, appealed, it is rumoured, on a doubt suggested by a Cambridge fielder. My memory may be wrong, but I feel sure that a voice from the Pavilion cried 'Ask!' Mr. Ford, on the roof of the Pavilion, may not have heard this Voice, or it may have been hallucinatory! Mr. Ford approves of the verdict 'Not out,' but it is odd that his brother, the catcher, was then certain, and that Mr. Leslie did not appeal. But neither has given the historian 'an absolutely positive verdict.' Mr. Evans's bowling on that day was not to be faced; Mr. A. F. J. Ford was the colour of the rainbow with bruises, and I was sorry for Mr. Ivo Bligh. But Mr. Evans did not dash down the ball very short to bruise or cause a catch; his were balls of the proper length. Mr. G. B. Studd's bails went wild ways to the very first ball. Of Mr. Ridley's inspiration when he went on with slows (1875) when there were three wickets to fall for fourteen runs, Mr. Ford says that it was reckoned good generalship, but 'I've always wondered

what would have been said if Smith or Macan, or Sims or Patterson, had hit a couple of fourers off them.' Why, nothing unfriendly could have been said. It was a moment for desperate measures. My brother deliberately sent a full pitch as near Mr. Sims's head as he could; Mr. Sims let out, the wet ball was heavy, and Mr. Pulman made the catch with perfect coolness and judgment. Then there were six to get and two wickets to fall. Now, Mr. Ridley had no very fast bowler to inspire terror; the next most nerve-shaking thing was his own slows. They were not so very slow, they were not high tossed, and close behind them came running the stately and commanding form of the bowler, with his great certain hands. '*The batsmen did the rest,*' and 'the psychological moment.' 'His legs are shaking,' said a good judge, as the last man walked up to the wicket which he could not defend. So the story went at the time. It is an odd point of evidence that I cannot certainly remember whether I saw these events. I seem to remember Mr. Pulman's catch. But then, I also seem to remember entering my own house, and hearing one who had played whistling on the stairs. 'How *can* you whistle?' I asked gloomily, and the other answered, 'We won.' So I must have left the field in despair before the last six overs, in which Mr. Pulman's catch occurred. The human memory is very fallible.

* *

Now, as to the incident when Mr. Shine bowled to the boundaries to prevent Oxford's follow on, I think that no excuse was made, as on a previous occasion, as to a council of war between the last two Oxford bats. I did not witness the unholy scene that followed. But I don't think the device was cricket; and, thanks to Mr. G. O. Smith, it failed. We got 330 for six wickets—Mr. Ford says 330 for *three* wickets—and I don't know that I ever enjoyed anything so much in my life. Among great matches I reckon 1891. Cambridge was very strong indeed, and Oxford looked well on paper, but was not equal to the other team. Cambridge went in to get 93, but Mr. Berkeley bowled five wickets for 20 in twelve overs; three others fell, and if Mr. Samuel Woods had been a nervous man it would have been 1875 over again. But Mr. Woods is *not* timid, and hit a boundary off his first ball. Messrs. Douglas, Foley, Jackson, Macgregor, and Streatfeild fell to Mr. Berkeley. He used to go in last, and in 1892 I suggested, in the *Saturday Review*, that he ought to be tried as first wicket.

Probably by a coincidence, he was tried, going in just before lunch and, very wisely, taking a little refreshment ere he marched to the pitch. He made 38 (b. Jackson), so I was not so far wrong. That was the year when Mr. Jardine made 144, and Mr. V. T. Hill hit so beautifully for 114. That was something like smacking! The right readers, and I hope there are many thousands of them, will find Mr. Ford's book a present joy and a possession for ever, like the work of Thucydides.

ANDREW LANG.

NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The Editor requests that his correspondents will be good enough to write to him informing him of the subject of any article they wish to offer, before sending the MS. A stamped and addressed envelope should accompany the MS. if the writer wishes it to be returned in case of non-acceptance. The Editor can in no case hold himself responsible for accidental loss. All communications should be addressed to

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